

HIGH ACHIEVING NONCONVENTIONAL WOMEN
AND THEIR STRUGGLES WITH CONVENTIONAL IMPULSES

By

DEENA BENVENESTE PARGMAN

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2003

Copyright 2003

by

Deena Benveneste Pargman

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
ABSTRACT	v
CHAPTER	
1 OVERVIEW	1
2 METHODS	6
Introduction	6
Project Motivation/Researcher Bias	6
Research Design	11
Sample Description	20
Data Collection	26
Plan of Analysis	29
3 HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL CONTEXT	33
Pre-1960s Historical Context	35
Ancient Hebrews	36
Ancient Greeks	37
Ancient Romans	39
Early Christians	40
Protestant Reformation	44
Colonial America	46
Early 1800s	49
Progressive Era 1860s-1920s	54
The Great Depression	59
From WWII to The Golden Age of the Family: 1940s and 1950s	60
Theoretical Context Pre-1960	62
Structural-Functionalist Theory	63
Economic Choice Theory	64
Scripting Theory and the Social Construction of Reality	66
Post-1960s Context	71
Decreased Stigma for Premarital Sex for Women	72
Increased Opportunities for Financial Independence	75
Alternatives to Traditional Gender and Family Roles	77
Theoretical Context: Post-1960s	82

4	FINDINGS	87
	Introduction	87
	Dating and Sexual Behaviors	95
	Erotic Friendships and Marriage	107
	Work, Money, and Mothering	137
5	CONCLUSIONS	151
	Implications and Avenues for Future Research	154
	Final Thoughts	158
APPENDIX		
A	INTERVIEW GUIDE	161
B	STUDY SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS	165
	REFERENCES	166
	BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	176

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

HIGH ACHIEVING NONCONVENTIONAL WOMEN
AND THEIR STRUGGLES WITH CONVENTIONAL IMPULSES

By

Deena Benveneste Pargman

December 2003

Chair: John Scanzoni
Major Department: Sociology

The goal of this study is to describe high-achieving, single women's experience with, views about, and hopes for future relationships with men. The study sample includes 25 women aged 28 to 35. The sample is a convenience and snowball sample. The study participants were interviewed about the sources of influence on their views of sexuality and relationships, their current sexual and dating behavior, their views of single and partnered life, perceived changes in women's relationship opportunities since the 1960s, and future hopes for relationships, family life, and child-bearing.

Data suggest participants experience a high level of dissonance between their stated views, and their behaviors as high-achieving, single women. While hoping for a relationship, they are at the same time aware of the many benefits they associate with being single, which include: ability and time to focus on personal development, financial independence, and the ability to organize life around their own needs and preferences.

Participants are actively working to reconcile some of their traditional desires with their current, nonconventional lifestyles. In doing this, participants are changing their ideas about what is best for themselves with regard to relationships, family life, and children. Participants ultimately hope to find partners who will recognize and share some of their seemingly dissonant hopes for both a traditional and nonconventional lifestyle. A relationship with such partners would, they believe, allow them to hold a variety of roles including earner, parent, caregiver and care-receiver and would allow them to switch roles as changing needs and preferences require. Participants recognize it will be difficult to find and maintain such partnerships, and are at the early stages of considering alternative ways to meet their relationship needs, while still holding on to their more traditional desires to partner and to marry. Participants are clear, however, that they are not willing to compromise on many of their relationship preferences as they are currently enjoying many benefits they associate with single life.

CHAPTER 1 OVERVIEW

Prior to the 1960s, women's relationships with men and marital life were largely shaped by concrete needs and values: women's financial dependence on men, the need to find a marital partner to insure financial support, and the societal expectation that women not engage in sexual intercourse outside of marriage (Reiss, 1990; Rubin, 1990). The "sexual revolution" and expansion of workplace opportunities for women of the 1960s and 1970s were supposed to help women achieve, or move closer to, both economic and sexual equality with men. Advocates hoped such equality would allow women to lead lives more consistent with their own preferences, unburdened by financial dependence.

Research indicates that since the 1960s, women's sexual behavior has become increasingly similar to men's in terms of number of partners, age at first intercourse, and variety of sexual experiences (Laumann et al, 1994). Women's labor force participation has also increased dramatically since that time (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002; Hayghe, 1997). These two measures indicate that the sexual revolution and expansion of workplace opportunities have made significant strides toward their intended behavioral outcomes.

While researchers have documented women's behavioral changes, there is little sociological research documenting how such behavioral changes have changed women's experience with "erotic friendships" (EFs). In developing the term "erotic friendship" Gravenhorst (1988) redefined and expanded legitimate models of dyadic relationships.

Gravenhorst joined concepts of the expectation of restricted sexual exchange (monogamy) with the emotional sense of belonging that is the core of dyadic relationships. The term is meant to convey that the erotic friends are committed to each other on a sexual and emotional level. "Erotic friendship" is an inclusive term describing a variety of relationships: married, cohabiting, or nonresidential. Because of this inclusiveness, EF may be the most appropriate label for the desired relationships described by participants.

The goal of this study was to describe women's experience with, views about, and hopes for future EFs among a specialized subset of the population: single, heterosexual, economically-secure women. The study sample included 25 women aged 28 to 35. The sample was a convenience and snowball sample, with friends and colleagues of the principal investigator assisting in the recruitment of participants who fit the research criteria. Once completing the interview, participants were asked to identify potential participants. Given the size of the sample, method of recruitment, and exploratory nature of the study, the results are not generalizable. However, the results do contribute to our understanding of the views relating to EFs of single, adult, economically-secure women, and the project in its entirety conveys the theoretical and historical significance of the changes at least some women have experienced in their views, hopes and expectations of erotic friendships.

New action theories (Alexander, 1988) proved most appropriate for explaining the study's findings. New action theories suggest people are actively producing their realities, rather than simply reproducing social roles and scripts created and supported by others. Alexander includes Giddens' structuration theory as an example of the principles defining new action theories (Giddens, 1984). This theory highlights the interplay between action

and structure, and the ways in which people create the conditions of their lives within the context of a social environment which both constrains and enables them. This interplay was evident in participants' responses. Participants' responses reflect both their pioneering views and behaviors, as well as the "pull" of a more traditional lifestyle and sources of influence, such as parents and religion. In accordance with new action theories, the focus of the analysis is on the participants' effort and struggle to define, develop, and maintain meaningful relationships which suit their often-changing and seemingly contradictory wants and preferences.

The participants' views reflect a dissonance between their conventional relationship desires, their engagement in very nonconventional behaviors, and their hope of being able to maintain many aspects of their single life once in an EF. Participants speak of their strong personal desire to be in a relationship and to marry as well as feeling social and family pressure to marry. They speak of the "dangers" of appearing to be too sexually experienced, and suspect men do not want to be in an EF with a woman who has too much sexual experience. They acknowledge the desirability of role complementarity and its contribution to the stability of relationships. Further, they can imagine circumstances, particularly if young children are present, where it would be preferable to be financially supported (or at least the junior earner) and to have someone with whom to divide the labor and decision-making of running a household. Participants suggest today's EFs are more challenging to develop and maintain than in the past because there are no reliable scripts to tell men and women what to do.

However, alongside these traditional notions, participants also speak of a constant questioning of whether EFs, and in particular, marriage, are "all they are cracked up to be." They speak of the joys associated with living as a single, economically-secure

woman, able to set up their life and their surroundings according to their own needs and preferences. They speak with pride of being “pioneers,” part of the first generation for whom living as they do is a realistic option for large numbers of women. They question their ability to give up the independence they have achieved, and suggest they would rather remain single than compromise on much of what they want from a relationship—though they have difficulty articulating exactly what that is. They want marriage and they want children, but they want their EF to afford them the opportunity to grow and change, and to play many roles—earner, parent, caregiver, partner. The data suggest participants hope to find someone who understands that EFs require ongoing, active negotiation and flexibility. They hope to find someone who will negotiate with them fairly, someone who will recognize, validate, and support their desire to maintain some aspects of their independence while forming a relationship based on interdependence. This partner would recognize that needs and preferences change according to time and circumstance. The participants believe that to have a successful EF both partners must have the skills and willingness to be flexible and to play many roles within the relationship and to adapt and innovate as their changing values, preferences, and opportunities demand.

The participants’ views of EFs are characterized by an ongoing effort to reconcile their modern world with lingering traditional values in a constantly changing and evolving context—an effort which leaves them questioning the likelihood of finding and maintaining satisfying EFs. The participants have difficulty articulating, and perhaps even conceptualizing this process because they lack a readily accessible model or vocabulary for describing their experiences and relationship preferences. They are very clear, however, in communicating, through their words and actions, that they are not

going to settle for much less than what they desire in an EF; their current lifestyle offers too many benefits, and unlike women in previous generations, they are not compelled to partner by monetary needs or overpowering social norms to marry. Participants indicate they will remain single rather than sacrifice the desired qualities in an EF and appear to be at the early stages of imagining alternative ways to meet their needs and preferences outside of an erotic friendship.

The participants are living a nonconventional lifestyle, though with misgivings. They have fulfilled what some might call the early feminist goals, particularly as envisioned by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, of economic independence from men. However, they have not fulfilled the later feminist goal of reconciling economic and personal independence and interdependence in a satisfying erotic friendship (Eisenstein, 1986; Friedan, 1981). This project explores their efforts to accomplish this goal and the various ways in which their milieu both constrains and enables their efforts.

CHAPTER 2 METHODS

Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological steps followed for this project, and is divided into the following subparts: (a) Project Motivation and Researcher Bias; (b) Research Design; (c) Sample Description; (d) Data Collection; and (e) Plan of Analysis. First, the Project Motivation and Researcher Bias section reviews the researcher's reasons for undertaking this project, and is an attempt to describe any personal history or agenda that could potentially color the lens through which the data is viewed. Second, the Research Design section describes the research methodology and the research instrument used in the project. The third section, Sample Description, describes the study sample, method of recruitment, and the numerous difficulties encountered in recruiting study participants. The fourth section, Data Collection, describes the interview process. The final subsection, Plan of Analysis, reviews the steps taken in organizing, analyzing, and presenting the data and research findings.

Project Motivation/Researcher Bias

Sociologists have great freedom to explore topics of interest and relevance to our own lives. Unlike the chemist or geologist, the subjects of sociological research often involve situations or conditions that have been lived or experienced by the researcher. Therefore, it is important for sociological researchers to reflect on their own motivations for pursuing a particular research question, and the potential bias their motivations may present.

Sociologists have long grappled with the issue of researcher bias and the challenge of exploring social problems without infusing the researcher's preconceived notions on design or analysis. As early as 1876, Spencer (1876) cautioned that we must guard against perceiving "the natures of other men in terms furnished by our own feelings and idea" (p. 145). Vidich and Lyman (1985) suggested a full understanding of social phenomena can occur only when the investigators are aware of the sources of the ideas that motivate them. Feminist researchers have also addressed the issue of researcher bias and many have concluded that while "researcher bias" is generally considered an impediment to scientific inquiry, "bias," or personal interest, may also contribute to meaningful research agendas and passionate researchers (Bologh 1990; Smith 1987).

It is impossible to avoid, in the social or any other kind of science, the inclusion of our life experiences, personal interests, and unique perspective on whatever question we may be addressing (Hooks 1984; Smith 1987). Social scientists, however, must pay particular attention to researcher bias, because they may be more easily criticized as being motivated by a social agenda or personal need than are nonsocial scientists. Understanding the value of being reflective and forthright about researcher motivations, I offer my motivations, as best I understand them, for focusing on the motivations, values, and expectations shaping adult women's pursuit of, and experiences with, erotic friendships.

I have been interested in the sexual and relationship choices and behavior of women since my experience as a resident assistant in college. In this role, many young women came to me to discuss their dating and sexual experiences. I was struck by the inconsistencies between what these women reported they wanted to be doing sexually with their partners, and what they said they actually did. I was particularly intrigued by

the way they spoke of their experiences as being somewhat out of their control and dependent on the will of their partner. These young women spoke about fears of appearing too promiscuous, yet at the same time, of their inability or unwillingness to stop an encounter before it went beyond where they wanted it to go. Ironically, their fear of appearing too interested in sex prevented them from speaking directly about what they would or would not do during a sexual encounter, and put them in a position of reacting to their partner's actions. While an undergraduate and graduate student, I devoted several projects to better understanding this population, the choices they made, and the constraints within which they made those choices.

During this time, my thinking about sexuality was largely shaped by sexual scripting theory, and the idea of the traditional sexual script. This script placed men in the role of aggressor and women in the role of gatekeeper in sexual interactions, and suggested that women should not appear too interested in sexual activity, for fear of appearing unfeminine. I understood this script to have a significant effect on how men and women understood and evaluated their sexuality and sexual behavior. Most interestingly, I learned that the power of this script stemmed from women's financial dependence on men, and women's need to please men to secure their financial future. This was my introduction to the idea that something as personal as sexuality could be linked with something so seemingly unsexual as money and politics. Sexual scripting theory was a very satisfying theory in that it seemed to explain so much of what I saw, heard, and read during college. Sexual scripting theory and the context it provided for understanding sexuality, is one of the main reasons I found sociology a compelling discipline.

After leaving the university environment, conversations with women produced similar themes of the ongoing influence of the traditional sexual script, fears of being or appearing too sexual, feelings of needing to behave in certain ways to “get” a man. But as I got older, approaching 30, the themes seemed to change. Friends were doing things I did not expect them to do: dating a lot of men, experimenting sexually without much shame, buying houses, taking exotic trips, living for today and planning for their future as a single person, and generally not “waiting” to do things until they had a partner. Clearly, they did not need a man to secure their financial future, and clearly they were less concerned about what others thought of their sexual and dating experiences—though some concerns remained in this area. This seemed a dramatic change from what I had witnessed and learned, and the discussions I had been a part of even a few years ago. I began to think some fundamental change was happening to the script these women were following as they aged, gained economic independence, and continued to pursue romantic relationships. In fact, they did not seem to be following any script I recognized.

During this time, both of my sisters went through divorces. Additionally, of my three closest friends, one divorced her husband just prior to her 30th birthday, and the two other friends remained single into their thirties. Suddenly we were discussing singleness as a state of being, not something we assumed would be changing. I became intensely curious as to what was motivating these women in their pursuit of relationships. It seemed to me, in this area of life I assumed to be scripted, my friends and sisters had no particular script to follow. I witnessed, as an observer, the discomfort and struggle of not having a clear script: not being sure what to reveal to partners, feeling the need to justify behavioral and relationship choices to others, constantly negotiating what came next and what would be expected of their relationships. It appeared the idea of a sexual script, so

relevant for my college-aged years, was much less relevant, maybe even absent, several years later. Or alternatively, that their difficulty in not following a particular script highlighted the theory's continued relevance.

Sexual scripting theory (Gagnon & Simon, 1973, Simon & Gagnon, 1986) suggests an intimate link between women's sexuality and the ways in which they pursue relationships, with women's economic dependence on men. Watching my friends and sisters approach their relationships from a position of economic independence, I saw the dynamics and the script were quite different when economic need was not an issue. I had previously thought social scientists would need to wait several generations into women's economic independence before we could see and evaluate the effects of financial independence on women's sexuality and pursuit of relationships. I assumed women would still be influenced by dynamics which governed the behavior of their mothers and grandmothers, and which were still visible in media images. However, after seeing my friends and sisters, it appeared that at least some of the effects of economic independence—or perhaps the effects of something else—were visible immediately. Additionally, new media images were suggesting women's relationship options had indeed expanded, and that how women governed themselves in relationships reflected personal choices and life experiences, rather than a preset script. These are the personal observations and experiences that motivated this project. New action theories, which suggest people are struggling to produce new roles and scripts, suddenly seemed more relevant than the theories that had previously seemed to explain so much about women's behaviors, wants, and choices.

At the same time I was making these observations, television, movies, and popular books made it clear I was not the only one wondering about these seemingly

dramatic changes in women's lives and relationship options. While academic literature provided few examples of research on a post-college age, economically independent population, the popular media was beginning to document their experiences. *Sex and the City*, *Ally McBeal*, and *Bridget Jones' Diary* seemed to capture something about the pleasures and the angst associated with being a single, adult woman. They present female characters who enjoy their work, their income, and their friends, and who are also actively engaged, sometimes obsessively so, in finding an erotic friendship. These shows suggest something is "missing" in these character's otherwise busy, exciting, financially secure, and happy lives. The images focus on what women "want" not "need" from relationships. The shows suggest that with women's increasing financial security and satisfaction in the workplace, needs and wants are now more focused on emotional and sexual satisfaction. At the same time, some familiar themes of wanting to be "rescued" by a man, or needing a man to feel complete, are also present. While these shows and their characters seemed to touch on a subject not yet explained by academic work, I questioned the extent to which they correctly represented the issues affecting real women. This research represents a step towards understanding adult, single, economically-secure, heterosexual women's views of and experiences with erotic friendships. The steps taken to explore this area of inquiry are outlined below.

Research Design

This section describes the process of determining the appropriate research method, and development and design of the research instrument. As discussed in the literature review, there is little prior academic work to suggest research design for studying this population's views and experiences with EFs. Several alternative research proposals were explored and then dismissed as each attempt focused on narrow research questions,

without the necessary supporting information. Attempts to answer specific questions repeatedly raised the same problem: no one had documented the relevant issues for exploring single adult women's views and experiences with EFs. Likewise, a research design for exploring these issues with a post-college age population had not been established in the literature. After much discussion and debate, it was decided that this project would be exploratory in nature and would utilize a qualitative approach.

Qualitative methods address the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of things, their "essence and ambience" (Berg, 1989, p. 3). Qualitative techniques allow researchers to understand how others organize, process, and give meaning to their lives, and how they make sense of themselves, others, and their life experiences.

This view of qualitative research stems from a symbolic interactionist perspective on understanding how people orient themselves in the world. While symbolic interaction (SI) has varying meanings for researchers utilizing this perspective, a common thread is that SI focuses on understandings, as well as perceptions of and about people, symbols, and objects. SI assumes that humans are not controlled by biological instinct. Rather, human behavior depends on learning, and we communicate what we learn through symbols, the most common system of symbols being language (Berg, 1989, p. 8). The main task of the researcher utilizing this perspective is to understand the meanings attached to the language used by research participants.

The substantive basis for symbolic interaction is frequently attributed to the social behavioral work of Dewey (1930), Cooley (1902), Parks (1915) and Mead (1934, 1938), but Blumer (1969) is considered the founder of SI. In expressing his view of symbolic interaction, Blumer explains

Symbolic interactionism . . . does not regard meaning as emanating from the intrinsic makeup of the thing, nor does it see meaning as arising through psychological elements between people. The meaning of a thing for a person grows out of the ways in which other persons act toward the person with regard to the thing. Their actions operate to define the things for the person; thus, symbolic interactionism sees meaning as social products formed through the activities of people interacting. (p. 5)

Blumer (1969) suggests that meanings derive from the social process of people or groups of people interacting. Meanings allow people to produce various realities that constitute the sensory world (the so-called real world), but because these realities are related to how people create meanings, reality becomes an interpretation of various definitional options. Consequently, "it is not important whether or not the interpretation is correct—if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas & Swaine, 1928, p. 572). In other words, how inhabitants of a setting define their situation determines the nature and meaning of their actions and experiences, as well as the setting itself.

Although social roles, institutional structures, rules, norms, goals, and the like may provide the raw material with which individuals create their definitions, these elements do not by themselves determine what the definitions will be or how individuals will act. Rather, definitions and meanings are negotiated through the process of social interaction, role-taking, and mutual efforts to understand the other (Berg, 1989).

The qualitative researcher seeks to learn how individuals understand their life and their world, as expressed by their own language and the meanings individuals assign to their experience. This is the reason for approaching this topic from a qualitative approach and a symbolic interactionist perspective. A qualitative approach is appropriate when pursuing insight into how women process what they know about their own preferences for relationships, their own experiences, their perceived likelihood of relationship

success, how they define relationship success, their own beliefs about what is shaping their EFs, and the terms and concepts they use to explain this aspect of their life to themselves and others. The focus is on their interpretation and how they make sense of what they “know” to be true. To glean this information, it is necessary to approach the issue by seeing each research participant as an expert in what these issues mean for them, and how they experience them. This is part of what it means to take a qualitative and symbolic interactionist approach to inquiry and data collection.

Once deciding to take a qualitative approach, the next decision was to choose among various qualitative methods for researching the factors shaping adult women’s sexuality and pursuit of EFs. The investigator had conducted focus groups and face-to-face interviews as a research assistant while in graduate school, and was most comfortable and experienced with these research methods. Both of these methods were considered, but focus groups were quickly determined to be inappropriate. Focus groups would be difficult to arrange in Atlanta due to the city’s dispersed population and infamous traffic problems. Even if arranged, they would likely only attract people who had strong feelings about the subject and were not intimidated by the logistical obstacles or the prospect of speaking about personal issues in a group setting. Unlike in a university environment, such as Gainesville, where academic research is “in the air” and participation in academic research is not uncommon, Atlanta would be a more challenging place to organize a focus group, as the idea of participating in academic research is somewhat more remote. Of 12 preliminary interviews with potential participants only one person was willing to participate in a focus group.

In addition to the logistical obstacles, focus groups were also rejected because it was feared participants would be less likely to be open and honest about this issue in a

group environment. It was also feared that those who did speak may not represent the typical woman, but rather the more aggressive, confident, or articulate person. Accordingly, the focus group was rejected as a methodology.

As the better alternative, the face-to-face interview was selected. Having selected the individual interview as the most appropriate method, a semi-structured interview guide was designed. Open-ended research questions were drafted to elicit from participants, in their own words, their experiences, views, expectations, and hopes for their erotic friendships. The semi-structured interview model insured participants would be asked a consistent set of questions, while allowing the interviewer to use her judgment in exploring issues revealed by the participant. This process recognizes the symbolic interactionist perspective that people understand the world in varying ways, and in their own terms and allows the interviewer to adopt the participant's language or conceptualizations so as to further explore the area of inquiry (Berg, 1989).

A pilot study was conducted to determine the appropriateness of the first draft interview guide. The interview guide was pilot tested on three women who met the research criteria, but who would not be included in the sample. The interview guide proved successful in terms of depth of participant responses and interview length. One additional area of inquiry was added to the interview as a result of the pilot study. The issue of "waiting," often stated as "I am/am not waiting until I find someone to . . .," emerged as an issue relevant to adult single women's lives, and reflective of a perspective toward their singleness. Two questions addressing the issue of "waiting/not waiting to do something until finding a partner" were added to the interview.

The interview guide used in the project interviews contained 54 questions, divided into nine sections:

- Demographic information
- Sources of information about sexuality while growing up
- Current sources of influence on sexuality
- Influence of work and money on erotic friendships
- Current sexual behavior
- Importance of emotional fulfillment in EFs
- General conclusions about EFs
- Plans/expectations for marriage and child-bearing
- Perceived changes in women's experience of EFs since 1960s

The demographic questions in the first section were primarily used to provide the interviewer some time to develop rapport with the participant, and to introduce or “warm-up” (Berg, 1989, p. 38) the respondent for the question/answer format of the discussion. A demographic portrait of the sample is presented in Appendix B. Participants were not compared or analyzed by demographic characteristics.

Questions in the second and third section addressed influential sources of information about sexuality while growing up and while as an adult, respectively. These questions reflect the principles of sexual scripting theory, specifically, that sexual norms and behaviors reflect and are shaped by messages sent by cultural mediators, such as parents, friends, religion and media (Gagnon & Simon, 1973; Laumann et al, 1994). If not mentioned specifically by the respondents, the interviewer probed for information related to each of these sources.

Questions in section four addressed the significance of work in the lives of the participants, the degree to which participants feel they can live comfortably on their own income, the types of financial expectations they have of potential erotic friends, and how these expectations may affect their erotic friendships. The questions in this section were designed to determine the impact of work and finances on EFs.

Several researchers have discussed how paid work may impact women's sexual and romantic relationships with men (Hite, 1987; Kamen, 2000; Orenstein, 2001; Reiss,

1990). Shere Hite (1987) predicted that as women find financial independence, personal satisfaction and purpose in the world of work, they will be less likely to make EFs a priority or a major source of their identity. Respondents in Orenstein's (2001) study of single women discussed the difficulties of balancing a focus on work and focus on EFs, and expressed fear that one came at the expense of the other. Journalist Paula Kamen's research suggests work and economic independence have shifted women's expectations of what they want in an EF from, as one chapter title stated, "meal ticket" to "teammate" (Kamen, 2000, p. 85). Questions in this section address the impact of work and money on participants' preferences for erotic friendships, the time available for them, and how they imagine work and money issues will affect any future EF.

Questions in section five relate to women's current sexual and dating behavior. This is the briefest section of the interview with questions addressing participants' comfort in approaching men they are attracted to, asking men on a date, and discussions of contraception and disease prevention measures. These questions were the most concrete in the interview, requiring participants to think and speak about actual behaviors. The intention was to determine if their stated views about their sexuality and the ways in which they pursue EFs is reflected in the behaviors in which they engage. As discussed above, Kamen (2000) suggests that women in this age group are beginning to "rewrite" the script for sexual or potentially sexual encounters with behaviors catching up with idealized views about equality in terms of who can initiate dates and sexual activity. Kamen's respondents reported feeling more comfortable expressing their preferences for sexual behavior and condom use, but they still prefer men to lead those conversations, or that activity progress without conversation (Kamen, 2000).

Other theorists imagined women's attention to work and accompanying financial independence would change sexual dynamics for women, making them more likely to focus on sexual pleasure, and less concerned about issues related to preserving their "reputation" or finding a long-term EF (MacKinnon, 1989; Reiss 1986, 1990). The questions in section five were designed to elicit how women actually behave, what they are comfortable doing in sexual encounters, and how they feel their sexual behavior is linked to or affects their EFs.

Questions in section six address how women define emotional intimacy, what types of relationships provide them with a sense of emotional fulfillment, and how they meet their needs for emotional fulfillment when not in an EF. These questions relate to Scanzoni's work on primary relationships (Scanzoni, Polonko, Teachman, & Thompson, 1989) and erotic friendships (Scanzoni, 1995) and to Cooley's (1902, 1909) work on primary groups and the development of a sense of we-ness. The questions in this section ask respondents to define emotional intimacy and how the types of emotional intimacy they get from friends and family differ from that experienced in an EF.

Questions in sections seven and eight explored respondents' general views of EFs and marriage, their hopes for their own lives related to EFs and marriage (specifically) their hopes and expectations related to childbearing, and their feelings about childbearing outside of marriage. This section again touches on Hite's (1987) prediction that family would become less important as work, friendships, and other interests became more important to women. In contrast, popular media images suggest women in this age group remain focused on marriage and childbearing (Hewlitt, 2002; Orenstein, 2000). Demographers predict marriage is not only still a desired state, but will be an almost universal reality for women, with 90% of women born after 1964 predicted to marry

sometime in their life (Goldstein & Kenney, 2001). As for childbearing, Kamen's research suggests women are increasingly aware of and willing to consider their options for childbearing outside of marriage (Kamen, 2000).

The women in this sample have not yet made the time or emotional investment a husband or children require (though they may have made investments in other relationships). They have had several years to enjoy their income and develop their personal interests. They have also had the opportunity to observe their friends' relationships and marriages and the impact of childbearing on work, the marital relationship, and other relationships. This section addresses whether this length of time spent as an unmarried person, their personal observations, or some other factor, have affected their views of and desire for marriage and children.

Questions in section nine asked participants to describe what they see as the results of the "sexual revolution" and women's increased opportunities in the workplace. Rubin (1990) suggests that the effect of the women's movement and the sexual revolution was to make women somewhat freer sexually, but most men and women continue to feel ambivalent about women acting on their sexual feelings (Rubin, 1990). Despite the expression of egalitarian sexual views, many, if not most, people never got completely over the cultural elevation of the virginal woman, and many are still ambivalent about women acting on their sexuality. Even men, who presumably have benefited from a loosening of the strictures on women's sexuality, are somewhat torn between their views of equality between men and women on the one hand, and their desire to be with a woman who is not too "easy" on the other (Rubin, 1990, p. 118).

Rubin (1990) wrote about how women who lived through the 1960s and 1970s experienced the not-so "revolutionary" changes of these times. Journalist Paula Kamen

agrees with Rubins's findings and suggests that after a tumultuous period of change, the changes appear to have been more "evolutionary" than "revolutionary," that is, the changes in what constituted acceptable sexual behavior for women were more mild than anticipated. Women's increased workforce participation, however, dramatically changed women's relationship options, making it much easier for women to act on their own preferences related to sexual behavior and romantic relationships rather than on what they thought they needed to do to please a man (Kamen, 2000; Orenstein, 2000; Reiss, 1990). Questions in this section were designed to elicit from participants what they perceived to be the relevant changes emerging from the sexual revolution and women's large-scale entry into the workplace. They were asked to compare what they perceived to be the work, sexual, and EF opportunities experienced by women of their generation, with those of their mother's generation. Finally, women were asked how they would describe the overall effects of these changes: Do they represent an improvement or a worsening of conditions for women? Did some things improve, but others became more difficult? How did such changes affect erotic friendships?

The complete interview guide is attached as an appendix. Prior to recruitment and data collection, the principal investigator received approval of the interview guide from the University of Florida's Institutional Review Board.

Sample Description

This section describes the study sample, how study population criteria were developed, the research site, and how research participants were identified and recruited.

The study sample includes 25 heterosexual, never-married, child-free, college-educated women between the ages of 28 and 35, not currently involved in an erotic friendship. All study participants work and reside in Atlanta, Georgia.

The first criteria for participants was that they be heterosexual. It was believed that the factors shaping homosexual or bisexual women's erotic friendships are different enough from heterosexual women, as to make the two populations incomparable given the purpose of this study. The second criteria for the study is that the participants be never-married. Here again, it was believed that prior marriage, and the experience of living and planning with a marital partner, would greatly affect the participant's views of EFs and would make women who had been married incomparable to women who had not been married. For this reason, women who had been married but were currently single, were excluded from the study. Participants were not asked whether or not they had cohabited with a partner. This was a significant oversight—it is likely that such relationships and the investment they require make those who have had such relationships somehow different from those who have not. At the very least, it would have been helpful to assess this information for later comparison between those who had experienced cohabiting relationships and those who had not.

The third criteria was age. There is very little sociological literature on sexuality and relationship issues for single women beyond college-age, but before midlife. In determining an age range, the investigator wanted to study women who had (likely) completed their education, lived independently for several years, and had pondered issues relevant to work, marriage, sexuality, and childbearing, and were still likely hoping for or open to both EFs and childbearing. It was determined that the age range of 28-35 would be suitable.

Psychologist Daniel Levinson includes this age span as part of a period of "young adulthood," a time when people are consciously planning and predicting how their adult life will unfold (Levinson, 1996). According to Levinson, people are cognizant that

decisions made during this time period related to relationships, marriage and childbearing will affect them the rest of their lives, and actively weigh the costs and benefits of their choices (Levinson, 1996).

This age group was also selected based on several assumptions made by the investigator. She assumed most single women aged 28-35 have had several years of living independently, outside of a school environment. This population has had several years to develop their personal interests and develop daily routines. They have made significant work and financial decisions, largely based on their own needs and preferences, independent of a spouse, and to some degree, parental influence. They have watched friends marry, have developed some opinions about what single life is like as compared to married life, and have perhaps contemplated what their life will be like if they do not develop an EF or marry. In addition to observing happily married and happily single people, they have also likely seen their contemporaries deal with divorce, unequal parenting responsibilities, disillusionment with marriage or frustration with single life. In terms of childbearing, women in this age group are witnessing friends contemplate, anticipate, and bear children, and are likely reviewing their own feelings about and options for childbearing. In terms of work and money, those in this age group have had several years to understand their profession and the world of paid work, to determine their level of commitment to work, and to adapt their financial expectations to their own income or earning potential.

The fifth criteria, college-educated, was included because the investigator wanted to speak to women who earned enough money to support themselves and who perceived they had options related to their work life. While a college education does not guarantee these things, it was assumed people who had completed college would be more likely to

feel economically secure and comfortable with their work options, than those who did not possess a degree. Also, the investigator assumed that by having completed their undergraduate education, this population would be more focused on work and relationships, than those who were perhaps still pursuing or contemplating pursuing an undergraduate degree.

A woman's status as child-free was not an initial inclusion criteria; however, it was added when two potential respondents presented this question. Child-free status was added as a criteria because it was believed single women with children had dramatically different life experiences than child-free women, and the presence of children may alter their motivations or opportunities for forming EFs (Gravenhorst, 1988), thereby making the two groups incomparable.

All research participants currently live and work in Atlanta, Georgia. Choosing Atlanta as a research site was primarily a matter of convenience as it is the home of the investigator. However, Atlanta is also an appropriate site for this research because of its large single population and its reputation as an area popular with young adults for its diversified economy and active social and recreational life. U.S. Census data (2000) suggest that 1, 422, 966 people, or 46% of the dating age population in Atlanta is single, never married (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Atlanta has experienced consistent job growth in recent years, and is ranked as the most desired place to move after graduation by college seniors in the Southeast. Atlanta Magazine lists 16 local organizations catering to singles seeking relationships and companionship (Dilonardo, 2002). All these characteristics make Atlanta a popular place for young adults seeking work and relationship opportunities, and hence an appropriate location from which to recruit the sample for this research.

Recruitment of the sample was accomplished through two means. First, the investigator asked ten associates to assist in locating candidates who met the sampling criteria and would be willing to participate. Additionally, upon completion of the interview, research participants were also asked to identify candidates. These two methods of recruitment make this a convenience and snowball sample.

Once candidates were identified, they were contacted by the investigator for a prescreening interview. During this prescreening interview, the scope of the project and requirements for participation were discussed, and the informed consent process was introduced. Thirty-one prescreening interviews were conducted, and 28 participants agreed to participate. Of the three who declined, two said the subject matter was too personal to discuss with a stranger, and one felt she could not make time for a 2-hour interview. Of the 28 who agreed to participate, two were later unable to schedule interviews due to time constraints. One interview was begun, but was interrupted, and the participant was unable to schedule a time for completing the interview. Twenty-five interviews were successfully completed.

The recruitment process proved to be more challenging than anticipated. Recruiters reported back to the investigator that when they asked friends or associates to participate, several potential candidates expressed they did not want to discuss a topic as “painful” as their single status. One woman said she had “no interest in discussing the great tragedy of my life.” While this was the most dramatic response, the theme was a common one. Few candidates were eager to become study participants. Those who agreed to participate seemed motivated by some combination of the following reasons: as a favor to the person who asked them to participate, because they had been involved in data collection and understood the difficulties of recruitment, or were curious about the project. Regardless

of the particular reason, it appeared that most participants had to overcome a reluctance to participate for them to actually complete the process.

The investigator planned for recruitment and data collection to take 6 weeks. It took 15 weeks, despite considerable flexibility, time, and concentrated effort on the part of the principal investigator and research assistant. This difficulty in recruitment, and what it may indicate about single adult women's views of and experiences with EFs, proved to be one of the first findings of the study.

Two other issues related to recruitment and the race and religion of study participants should be noted. First, the sample is disproportionately Jewish (the Jewish population in the metropolitan Atlanta area is 2.5%) (United Jewish Communities, 2002). Eight respondents identified themselves as Jewish, 3 Catholic, 1 Atheist (raised in a Christian home), 12 Protestant, and 1 Hindu. The disproportionately high number of Jewish participants may reflect that this population has fewer reservations about discussing sexual issues. Most of the Jewish respondents described a home environment where discussions of sex were not restricted, and several described the messages about sex from Judaism as less restrictive than the messages they imagined many Christians received, particularly Catholics. The high number of Jewish participants may also reflect that the principal investigator is Jewish, as were 3 of the 10 associates who provided assistance in identifying participants, though both Jewish and non-Jewish recruiters located Jewish candidates for the study.

Second, the study sample includes only one African-American participant, despite Atlanta being home to a large, college-educated black population. When it appeared recruiters were not finding African-American respondents, the investigator made a specific request that they make efforts to do so. Recruiters found three candidates who

met the research criteria. Two of the three candidates had children, and it was determined this made them incomparable to the others in the study, and they were not included in the sample. "Child-free" was then added to the sampling criteria. One African-American participant completed the interview. The investigator asked for her assistance in recruiting other participants and shared with her the difficulties in recruiting black participants. She called the investigator one week later and said she had asked four African-American friends or associates who met the criteria, but for a variety of reasons, including busy travel schedules and not wanting to discuss personal issues with a researcher, none were interested in participating.

Convenience and snowball sampling, as well as the recruitment challenges, bias the results toward homogeneity. However, after discovering potential participants' reluctance to discuss this topic, it now seems that such techniques are the only sampling methods which would work given the research topic and the investigator's resources. Berg (1989) suggests these challenges, and the limits to generalizability, are common to both exploratory work and work on topics of a private or "delicate" nature.

Data Collection

This section describes the process of collecting data for the study. Once agreeing to participate, each participant was contacted to schedule an interview. At the time of the interview, each participant was given an informed consent form. This form was read aloud by the interviewer. After signing the consent form, the interviewer again reminded participants of the following: (a) interviews will be taped and transcribed; (b) participants will be identified by a number and their name will not be on the tape or the transcribed copy of the interview; and (c) participants are free to end the interview at any time or to decline to answer any questions.

Participants were given several options as to where the interview could be conducted: their home, the apartment home of the research assistant, or a private office at Georgia State University (GSU). Location options were offered so participants could choose the environment which was most convenient for them and which would make them feel most comfortable. The principal investigator did not offer her home as a location for interviews as my home has many signs of my family status. After conducting two pilot study interviews there, it became clear my home was an inappropriate environment in which to conduct interviews.

Twenty-two participants elected to conduct the interview at their home. Two interviews took place at the research assistant's apartment. One interview was moved to a restaurant when a participant's roommate arrived home during the interview. One interview took place in the home of the principal investigator. In this case, the participant worked less than one mile from my home and indicated she preferred to meet there rather than at GSU or at her home. Interviews lasted between 1.5 and 3 hours, most were completed in about 2.5 hours.

Interview assistance was provided by Kimberly Martin, currently a master's student (graduation August, 2003; enrolled in doctoral program at University of Missouri, St. Louis) in Criminal Justice at Georgia State University in Atlanta. Ms. Martin has conducted qualitative interviews for two federally-funded research projects and has worked under supervision of professors at GSU, including Dr. Dean Dabney, Dr. Volkan Topali, Dr. Robert Friedman, and Dr. Sarah Eschholz. Ms. Martin's research experience includes interviewing study participants on sensitive topics such as criminal behavior, reaction to being victimized, and questions pertaining to voluntary and involuntary sexual behavior. Ms. Martin has taken undergraduate and graduate course work in

Sociology and Women's Studies and her own research focuses on factors shaping women's sexual behavior. Prior to her selection as an interviewer for this project, Ms. Martin conducted a mock interview with the investigator where her interviewing skills were clearly demonstrated. Before interviewing research participants, the investigator and Ms. Martin conducted three practice interviews with volunteers so as to insure consistency in administration of the interview and to explore any potential problems which may arise during the interview.

A research assistant was hired to insure the anonymity of respondents in the hopes of eliciting truthful and forthright responses to interview questions. Toward this end, the research assistant interviewed people the investigator might meet in the future, that is, friends of associates of the investigator whose path she would conceivably cross. It was assumed this would be a small number of respondents. It was hoped that associates of the investigator would be able to find participants among their colleagues or unclosed friends, people the investigator would be unlikely to meet. Unfortunately, this was not the case for a majority of potential respondents, 15 out of 25. There needed to be a stronger personal connection for people to be willing to participate, and it proved to be very difficult to find participants the investigator was unlikely to meet or who were comfortable being interviewed by a friend of a friend. Initially, the investigator resisted including these participants. It then became clear that these participants were necessary to meet the goal of 25 respondents. These participants were interviewed by the research assistant. Additionally, two participants whom the investigator had little chance of meeting told the recruiter they did not want to be interviewed by someone their friend knew. One additional respondent stated she did not want to be interviewed by someone who was married. The research assistant interviewed these respondents as well.

Plan of Analysis

This section explains how the interview responses were prepared for analysis and how analytical tools were applied to the data. Each interview was recorded on audiocassette tape. Interviews were transcribed in their entirety into word processing format. Additionally, the interviewer noted any unusual or unexpected reactions to questions or nonverbal language that would aid in the interpretation of responses. These notes were then developed into "debriefing sheets" that were reviewed at weekly meetings. Transcription was performed by the investigator so as to monitor the interviews conducted by the research assistant and to insure familiarity with all collected data prior to coding. However, in two situations, respondents requested that the investigator not listen to the tape recording of their interview; and to accommodate this request, these interviews were transcribed by a paid transcriptionist. [When these two participants expressed a reluctance to have the investigator hear their interview, they were reminded that the investigator would see the transcript; they said they understood, but preferred the investigator not transcribe their interview. When participants expressed this kind of discomfort, Ms. Martin reminded them they should not participate if they did not want to and that she would be happy to leave without conducting the interview. Both participants said they wanted to participate and both completed the interview.]

The interview transcripts were then analyzed to glean answers to 16 questions designed to elicit the participants' views, experiences, expectations, and hopes for their erotic friendships. According to Holsti (1968), content analysis includes "any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of messages . . . the inclusion or exclusion of content is done according to consistently applied criteria of selection; this requirement eliminates analysis in which

only material supporting the investigator's hypotheses are examined" (p. 598). Because this research is exploratory, with most of the PI's knowledge of the subject coming from media images and personal experience, hypotheses were not developed. Rather the "criteria" came from the following research questions which were "asked" of the data.

- Do sources of information about sexuality received while growing up affect participants' EFs as adults?
- What sources of information or experiences are currently shaping their EFs?
- How have participants' views about EFs changed as they have aged and gained experience?
- How does work affect their interest in, dedication to finding, or time for an EF?
- How do finances affect their interest in, dedication to finding, or time for an EF?
- Are their stated sources of influence on their EFs evident in their behavior?
- How do participants define emotional fulfillment?
- How do participants meet their needs for emotional fulfillment?
- Does a desire to be married affect their pursuit of an EF, or the preferences for an EF they are willing to compromise on, to be in one?
- Does a desire for children affect their pursuit of an EF, or what preferences for an EF they are willing to compromise on, to be in one?
- What do participants expect a future EF to look like?
- Does their current vision of EFs differ from the vision they had when they were younger?
- What qualities of an EF, are participants unwilling to compromise on?
- How do participants' options for sexual behavior and EFs differ from those experienced by their mothers? Do participants perceive their more expansive options for work, sexual activity and EFs as an improvement or worsening of conditions for women?
- How do participants feel about being single at this point in their lives?

Interview transcripts were reviewed to develop a list of initial themes and concepts for coding. Next, the specific research questions were applied to the data. Fully coding the data, and reaching what the investigator felt to be saturation of the data, required four readings of each interview.

Once coded, interviews were entered into The Ethnograph version 5 (Solaris, 2000). Ethnograph is a computer-based data management program designed to facilitate the storage, organization, and manipulation of qualitative research data. For purposes of this study, Ethnograph was used to aid in the management of the large amount of data collected, to store coded information in an easily accessible format, and to ease the process of analysis and writing by assisting with the location of relevant quotes from the interviews.

In an effort to answer the research questions, the investigator looked to the data for inductive and deductive themes and concepts. The themes and concepts researchers use in content analysis can be determined inductively, deductively, or through some combination of both. Abrahamson (1983) and Strauss (1987) suggest that an inductive approach begins with the researchers “immersing” themselves in the data, in order to identify the themes that seem meaningful to the research participants, resulting in themes that are “grounded” in the data from which they derive. These themes are then translated into *in vivo codes*, or codes that portray the actual terms and concepts used by the participants.

In a deductive approach, researchers apply some categorical scheme suggested by a theoretical perspective, and the data provide a means for assessing the relevance of that perspective for the research participants. This process results in *sociological construct codes*. Sociological construct codes reflect areas of interest to the researcher that are

commonly understood to be relevant to the field of study, but which may not actually be identified by the participants, for example, sexual scripts. In using sociological construct codes the researcher is applying their understanding of social phenomena to the data, and adding breadth and context to the data by placing participant's understandings in a sociological context (Berg, 1989). For this project, codes were developed using both an inductive and deductive approach, resulting in a combination of in vivo and sociological construct codes.

This chapter outlined the steps taken in the development and implementation of the research project, and the steps taken to organize and prepare the data for analysis. The following chapter presents the historical and theoretical context framing the study.

CHAPTER 3 HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL CONTEXT

This chapter presents the historical and theoretical context framing the study. The chapter is organized in two parts: (a) pre-1960, and (b) post-1960. This chronological division is appropriate as events of the 1960s, particularly the “sexual revolution” and expansion of workplace opportunities for women, led to dramatic changes in women’s behavior and, presumably, their views of and experiences with erotic friendships.

Prior to the 1960s, the conditions shaping women’s EFs incubated in a cultural context where men and women were expected to marry and follow distinct and complementary roles. Clearly defined social roles and scripts developed suggesting to men and women how they should govern themselves if they hoped to have a family and meet this strong societal expectation. For men, their role called for them to develop the skills necessary to provide for one’s family financially, with varying though generally expansive rules surrounding pre- and postmarital sexual behavior. For women, their role called for the development of homemaking skills, the avoidance of premarital sex, and faithfulness once in marriage. Historically, these social expectations strongly influenced the factors shaping women’s relationship formation, because, with few exceptions, marriage was the only way for women to insure their financial security.

In the last 40 years, however, the cultural context in which women experience their EFs has changed dramatically. Since the 1960s, increased opportunities for financial independence, a decreased stigma towards premarital sex, the changing significance of

marriage, and the eroding of strictly defined gender roles for men and women have led to significant changes in women's sexual behavior and relationship formation patterns, as documented by numerous other studies. While researchers have documented behavioral changes, the likely changed values, motivations, and expectations behind these new behaviors, remain undefined. This chapter provides the context for exploring possible changes in women's views, experiences, expectations, and hopes for erotic friendships.

The first part of this chapter presents the cultural and theoretical context in which women experienced their sexuality and relationships with men prior to 1960. Presented first is a historical review of the cultural context from Hebraic times through the 1960s. The review is not intended as an exhaustive presentation of all factors related to women's sexuality and relationship options, but rather is intended to highlight certain themes which evolved during this time, particularly the importance of the family as the fundamental unit of society, and distinct roles and differing sexual standards for men and women. The historical review is followed by a discussion of several sociological theories that explain how societal roles and values develop, become reified or institutionalized, and are then transmitted to future generations. These theories highlight how historically, people have "reproduced" what society expected of them through their relationships. These theories also help us understand how the factors shaping women's experience of relationships with men could remain somewhat constant during this extended period of time.

The second part of this chapter reviews the cultural context for women's sexuality and relationship formation since 1960. In this part several of the social, educational, and economic changes that have occurred since the 1960s are reviewed. These changes include increased opportunities for female financial independence, decreased stigma

towards non-marital sex for women, changing behaviors and attitudes related to family formation, and an erosion of previously clearly defined roles and scripts for men and women in romantic relationships. These changes require new theories to explain women's behavior, as the theories suggesting women are simply reproducing what society expects of them, are less relevant. Rather, it is currently unclear both what society expects, and whether women are governed by societal expectations to the degree they were in the past. In other words, rather than theories which explain how women "reproduce" what society expects of them, the current environment calls for theories that explain how women "produce" or "construct" relationships in an environment where options are dramatically increased and behavioral guidelines are dramatically decreased. The concept of "new" action theories is reviewed, as it provides a framework for theories which hope to offer insight to women's recently changed (and likely still changing) behaviors, as well as illuminating the factors currently shaping women's views of and experiences with erotic friendships.

Pre-1960s Historical Context

This section provides a review of the cultural context in which women made choices with regard to sexual behavior and relationships with men for the period ranging from Hebraic times until the 1960s. During this time women's values, motivations and expectations with respect to sexual behavior and relationship formation were strongly influenced by the need to marry to insure their financial security.

It should be noted that the study is primarily focused on American women of European descent (see Chapter 2 for further explanation of the study sample). Appropriately then, this historical review limits itself to the cultures having the strongest influence on this population. The absence of discussion of Asian, African, and other

cultures is not a slight to their value or to the insight they can provide, but rather reflects the cultural background of the majority of study subjects, and the more dominant influence of European cultures on mainstream American sexual and relationship values and behaviors, especially for the period before 1960. Many aspects of American sexual and relationship culture come from European settlers who came to America during the last four centuries (Reiss, 1960). The cultures of these settlers come primarily from Hebraic, Roman, and Greek civilizations. The following discussion of Hebraic, Roman and Greek civilizations is largely adapted from Ira Reiss's 1960 book, *Premarital Sexual Standards in America*.

Ancient Hebrews

Aspects of the pre-1960s cultural context within which women made decisions about sexual behavior and relationship formation are found as early as the ancient Hebrews. Hebrew culture promoted the importance of marriage and distinct roles for men and women, as well as different sexual standards for men and women.

Most information about Hebrew culture comes from the Talmud (the collection of ancient rabbinic writings, constituting the basis of religious authority in Orthodox Judaism) and the Old Testament. In ancient Hebrew culture marriages were arranged by parents, usually the father. Parents would decide which families they wanted to develop social and economic bonds with, and this bond was cemented through the marriage of their offspring. The legal age for marriage was 12 for boys and 13 for girls. Upon marriage the boy's family would pay the girl's family a "bride price." This fee did not represent a purchasing of the girl, rather it was intended to make up for the loss of services she formerly provided to the family. In an agrarian economy each family

member contributed to the financial well-being of the family, and to lose a daughter was to lose a worker (Deuteronomy, 21: 18).

Partly because of the need for workers, early marriage and many children were desired. Once married, the young bride was expected to run the house and have as many children as possible, preferably male children. In Hebrew culture women were respected for running the household and had power in that capacity. But as in other Semitic cultures, the man was the head of the household, followed by the oldest son (Deuteronomy, 21:18).

Hebrew culture also provides one of the first examples of different sexual standards for men and women. While both men and women were expected to have sex only in marriage, if a husband could prove his wife nonvirginal at the time of marriage, he could demand the bride-price back and have her stoned to death, if he wished. No such punishment existed for men if they were found to have had sex prior to marriage. Different standards for men and women also existed in divorce law as only men could initiate divorce. If the woman discovered her husband had had sex with someone else, or for other reasons wanted to divorce, she could not unless he allowed it (Deuteronomy 22: 20-22).

Ancient Greeks

The ancient Greeks also promoted distinct roles for men and women and considerably different guidelines for the appropriate expression of male and female sexuality. In Greek culture women were considered inferior to men and their lives were limited first to their father's home and then later to their husband's. Women were to marry at 18, men at 37 (Reiss, 1960). Once married, women were responsible for running the house and educating the children. Greek wives spent most of their lives in an isolated

part of the house called the "woman's quarter." This isolation kept them from meeting other men and all but eliminated the possibility of extramarital sex (Reiss, 1960).

Although the Greeks idealized their wives and daughters, men still had ultimate power in the household. Greek women's lives were primarily limited to their home where they focused on caring for their husband's needs and educating the children. If a wife's actions displeased her husband, it was legal for him to kill her.

Male sexuality, however, was celebrated and men often had many sexual partners before, during, and after marriage. It was acceptable, even expected, for men to have extramarital sex with other women and with younger males. Prostitution was considered a normal part of life in Greek society and prostitutes were not publicly shunned (Licht, 1953). The normalization of prostitution provided women in Greek society with two choices for insuring their economic security: they could either be wives and care for home and family, or they could be prostitutes and care for other women's husbands. In addition to regular prostitutes, there was the Hetaratae who were considered higher class prostitutes or mistresses. These women were often more educated and worldly than the wives of most men. One prominent Greek male summed up the male marital situation this way, "Man has the Hetaratae for erotic enjoyments, concubines for daily use and wives of equal rank to bring up children and be faithful housewives" (Licht, 1953, p. 399).

Different sexual standards for men and women were a basic element of Greek life. Greek culture allowed free expression of male sexuality, as evidenced by their tolerance of male homosexuality and pre- and extramarital sex for men. Women had fewer sexual freedoms pre-and post marriage, although interestingly, they did have a socially

acceptable option to being a wife—being a mistress—which allowed them to provide for themselves financially without being married.

Ancient Romans

Roman culture also maintained different sexual standards for men and women, but was less permissive of extramarital sex than Greek culture. In Rome both husbands and wives were expected to be monogamous, though male extramarital activity was tolerated. Prostitution flourished as it had in Athens, but it was considered an unpleasant aspect of life rather than a normative one (Reiss, 1960).

Unlike their Greek counterparts, Roman women were allowed to accompany their husbands to banquets and other public gatherings. Although such events exposed women to other men, female chastity was insured by strong cultural values that prized virgins and chaste women, and taught women to cherish this in themselves. Roman women's sexuality was more controlled by the power of these strong cultural values than by the physical limitation of being kept at home (Reiss, 1960).

Women's status improved in Rome around the time of the Punic Wars (286-146 B.C.) (Kiefer, 1953). The wars led to increased wealth, the importation of slaves to do the work formerly done by women, and the development of a leisure class. During this time women also gained more legal rights and were treated less like the property of their husbands. Women were able to inherit property and initiate divorce proceedings, and upper class women could participate more in public life. Different sexual standards for men and women, however, remained intact. Extra-marital sex was still strictly prohibited for women. If a man caught his wife committing adultery he could kill her, while no such right existed for the women who caught her husband committing the same act (Kiefer, 1953).

Early Christians

The influence of Christianity was not widely felt until several centuries after its beginnings (Reiss 1960). For the first three centuries of the common era, Christians were often rejected or persecuted for their beliefs, many of which were contrary to the standards of the day. For example, early Christians (what we would now refer to as Roman Catholics) resisted the emancipation of women and their increasing role in public life, and also held a much more somber view of sex and marriage than did the Hebrews, Greeks, or Romans (Reiss).

Christian beliefs became more widely felt when Emperor Constantine allied himself, and by implication, the state, with the Christian Church around the year 300 (Tannahill, 1992). Constantine believed Christianity could unify and organize the heterogeneous people of the Roman empire, who were spread from Scotland to the Black Sea. According to Tannahill,

During the confused and still obscure centuries between A.D. 400 and 1000, population shifted, rulers came and went, the whole face of Europe changed, and changed again. But the Christian church . . . survived and expanded as the one cohesive force in an unstable world. In almost every sense—even militarily with the Crusades—the Christian church proved itself to be the true successor of imperial Rome. (p. 137)

Tannahill suggests that perhaps in other circumstances, other times, Christian beliefs might not have gained the strong grip they did on western thought, but two factors insured Christianity's dominance: the general absence of law and order following the collapse of Rome and the disappearance of literacy from public and private life. The collapse of a central power made local, secular laws unenforceable and left a void filled by parish priests who preached a consistent message across the widespread area formerly under Roman control. In this way, Christian morality was spread and infused through the culture with social as well as religious authority.

In a more literate time, Tannahill (1992) suggests, priestly writings may have been challenged and debated, but during the so-called dark ages, all that was written and all that was read was largely controlled by the Church. As a result the words of St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and St. Paul took on an aura of revealed truth and served to shape religious thought for centuries to come, with many of their beliefs remaining prominent today.

St. Augustine's writings on sexuality were particularly influential. St Augustine, who led a full sex life, admitted to praying to God to "give me chastity, but not yet" (Tannahill, 1992, p. 141). St. Augustine, confused and offended by his own experiences, concluded that the fault of sexual desire lay not with God but with Adam and Eve. Originally, men and women had no sexual desire and would have engaged in sex only to procreate. However, when Adam and Eve fell into sin they became conscious of new and selfish impulses (which Augustine referred to as lust) over which they had little control. The result was the development of shame in their nakedness and their inability to control their lustful desires. The guilt of their original transgression still persists, according to Augustine, in humankind and that explains people's desire for sexual activity, separate from the desire to procreate. God had not intended us to carry this "burden" but rather to have a ways by which to have children. It was lust, as experienced by Adam and Eve, that converted sexuality into something shameful (Tannahill, 1992).

Along with this more negative view of sexuality and elevation of chastity came the notion that the clergy should be celibate. There were many barriers to enforcing clerical celibacy, most notably that many men entered the clergy as a route to pursuing careers in law, politics and other fields, and many were already married. But the Church prevailed and eventually, celibacy became a requirement of the clergy.

This justification fit with the Church's encouragement that people should strive to overcome their urges, and to use sex only to procreate. Whereas other religions expressed a preference for celibacy prior to marriage, early Christians believed celibacy was superior to marriage. St. Jerome wrote "I should like that every man to take a wife who cannot manage to sleep alone because he gets frightened at night." St. Paul agreed that celibacy was a more Christian condition since it removed a major distraction from devotion to the Lord. Still, he recognized it took a strong believer and a considerable amount of self-control to remain celibate, and so advised

It is better to marry than to burn . . . the husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. . . . Do not refuse one another except perhaps by agreement for a season, that you may devote yourself to prayer; but then come together again, lest Satan tempt you through lack of self-control. (I Cor. 7, 9, and 3-5)

Eventually, the Church made marriage a sacrament (i.e., undissolvable, sometime in the 12th or 13th century). Tannahill (1992) concludes,

By the time the Western world emerged from the "dark ages" sin had come to play a more important, because more immediate, role in Christian morality even than redemption. And of all the sins encompassed by this morality, none had such wide application as the sins of sex. Because of this, even the notional chastity of the priest gave him moral authority. Consciously or not, men and women with normal sexual appetites became obsessed by guilt. Sex might not be their only sin, but in the eyes of the Church it was their greatest. . . . It was, indeed, a remarkable achievement. (p. 161)

Early Christians rejected many of the cultural changes brought about by the Punic Wars, particularly those expanding the rights of women. In some respects, Christians were more egalitarian than Hebrew, Greek or Roman cultures in condemning the expression of both female *and* male sexual immorality and in giving a place of prominence to women in the Christian movement. However, it was early Christians who first suggested that female sexuality was evil and the source of men's downfall (Pleck & Pleck, 1980).

Sometime around the sixth century, Christians found a way to both "free" women of the burden of their sexuality and to remove it as a threat to men. Women in Christian society had an option that Greek and Roman women did not—Christian women could disclaim their sexuality and become nuns. With the threat of their sexuality removed, nuns could both avoid the church's condemnation and participate more fully in public life (Reiss, 1960).

The period between the 12th and late 16th century was a notable one in the history of women, not because it greatly changed women's lives, but because the image of women, and her connection to sexuality underwent dramatic change. At the beginning of this period, women were suspect, a necessary evil and the source of men's downfall. By the end of this period they were admired as chaste and motherly, the dominant image switching from Eve to the Virgin Mary. According to Tannahill (1992) this change likely came about, although scholars debate this still, largely due to the Crusades, women's greater participation in public life while the men were at war, and the exposure of European warriors to Islam and Muslim scholars and the reintroduction of the science and wisdom of the Classical world. These influences converged over time, and from them was born the concept of courtly love. The courtly view of love held women in high regard and suggested men should treat them with respect and care, admiring them from afar but not interfering with their purity or goodness. The archetypal example of courtly love involved a woman of high social class, and a man of lower social class, usually a troubadour, who sought to win her favor, but because of their differences was never allowed too close, and so continued to admire her, innocently, from afar. Rather than viewing women as temptresses, the courtly view of women viewed them as "angels" (Reiss, 1960, p. 55).

Historians have always been intrigued by courtly love as it was a fundamentally unreligious idea that emerged at a time when the Church was at its peak of powers. In fact, its origins in Muslim society, where women were strictly segregated, would seem to have made it unsuitable. But as described by Tannahill (1992), the poets of southwestern France, where courtly love had its genesis in Europe, set the tone for the European view of courtly love, by trying to replicate metaphorically the walls of the harem (i.e., some kind of barrier that would keep the image of women as pure and good, beautiful and virtuous).

A changing view of Mary also had great influence on views of women. Until the 12th century Mary had been regarded as one of many saints. But a “cult” of adoration for her was spread across Europe finding its most enthusiastic supporter in a French churchman, St. Bernard of Clairvaux. Under his leadership hundreds of abbeys were founded all over Europe dedicated to celebrating the Virgin Mary. Artists were commissioned to develop works of art and architecture in her honor, spreading the image of what women should aspire to be like. From the thirteenth century through the 15th century in Europe notions of women from courtly love, and images of Mary as the all loving, pure Mother mingled, improving women’s overall image by removing the focus on Eve and her transgressions (though still linking women’s image to exaggerated and idealized qualities) (Cott, 1978).

Protestant Reformation

When the religious reformers of the early 16th century rebelled against the rule of the Pope and the Catholic Church, one of their first concerns was the notion of clerical celibacy, for which they found no basis in the scriptures. In the battle to justify marriage for the clergy, they improved the overall status of marriage itself. Unlike early Christians

(Roman Catholics), they did not view marriage as a necessary evil. Martin Luther was a vocal opponent of the view of virginity and celibacy as a form of dedication to God, instead he viewed celibacy as unhealthy and abnormal. Luther felt marriage was necessary to channel people's sexual needs and that women should be regarded as man's partner in life, in procreation as well as more mundane areas.

Since marriage was so important to reformers, they believed a bad marriage should be ended. In the 12th century the Catholic Church had made marriage a sacrament; but reformers could find no basis for this in the Bible, and they returned authority over divorce largely to the secular authorities, though theologians would continue to advise civil leaders in matters related to divorce.

The other major focus of reformers was their absolute and uncompromising disapproval of extramarital sex. The Catholic Church's ambivalence toward marriage had created a more lenient view towards extramarital activity, and reformers hoped to counteract this through their more positive view of marriage. It was hoped that by promoting a more companionate and partnership model of marriage, people would choose partners whom they loved and respected, and thereby be less likely to engage in extramarital sex.

The notion that husband and wife should be partners and companions, and that there should be some romantic connection between marital partners, continued to spread across Europe through the 17th century, though it was still common for parents to choose their children's spouses based on the economic needs of the families. Parents would meet and discuss the merits of a marriage between their children. If an agreeable arrangement could be reached, the young man and woman would meet. If all went well, the couple would get engaged. During the engagement, couples were allowed to spend time

together, sometimes without parental supervision. As couples got to know each other, many fell in love. This connection of love and marriage and the allowance of time for love to develop prior to marriage further challenged traditional views of marriage (Dizard & Gadlin, 1990).

The romantic love movement represented a radical departure from former views of love and marriage, and it took several centuries before romantic ideals were diffused through the population. But the new ideals resonated with young people and increasing numbers rebelled against parentally-chosen marriages (Dizard & Gadlin, 1990). By the end of the 19th century in many parts of Europe, young people were choosing their own marital partners and love was the primary motivator for marriage. Although love in marriage and increasing equality between husbands and wives represented the new ideal, many found this ideal difficult to achieve. This was particularly true for those Europeans coming to America and experiencing the physical and emotional challenges of resettling in a new land.

Colonial America

The men and women who migrated from Europe to settle America brought with them ideas about sexuality and family shaped by the Protestant Reformation (D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988; Dizard & Gadlin, 1990). As discussed above, the Protestant view toward sexuality rested upon a larger system of beliefs about the family. Influenced by views of romantic love, husbands and wives were encouraged to love each other and to view the family as a "little commonwealth" ruled, with affection and care, by the father. Affectionate feelings should bind husband to wife, and parents to children. Within this context, and in accordance with Protestant beliefs, sex became both a duty husband and wife owed to each other and a means of enhancing the marriage.

Although the Protestant church's teachings and romantic love movement changed the way many people thought about love and marriage, the difficult nature of colonial life made emotional intimacy unlikely, or if present, difficult to maintain. Religious and community leaders wanted spouses to care for each other and to be affectionate in private, but also warned men against the dangers of becoming too close to their wives and families, thereby taking time and energy away from work (Dizard & Gadlin, 1990).

Colonial leaders promoted family harmony in part because conditions of that time made it likely that disharmony would lead to abuse and desertion. Difficult labor, small confined spaces, and large numbers of people living together all added to the difficulties of colonial family life. According to Dizard and Gadlin (1990), colonial leaders believed that if family life was not harmonious then other social institutions would not be either. For this reason, spouses were told it was their duty to God to care for each other. In situations where disagreements occurred, wives were expected, again out of duty to God, to submit to their husband's will.

During colonial times the view of women as lustful continued (Pleck & Pleck, 1980). Sex was seen as a dangerous force that distracted men from productive labor. Marriage was one way to channel this energy, but even married men had to be careful not to become too interested in sex (Pleck & Pleck). Interestingly, even though women were thought to have a more intense sex drive, men were again forgiven for engaging in sex outside of marriage, while women were given no such allowances. Women were consistently punished for violating their community's sexual standards, but the nature of the punishment varied widely based on region of the country (D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988). In a few New England communities, Plymouth for example, women who had adulterous affairs were required to wear a red A (for adulteress) on their clothing, or

more commonly, were severely whipped, fined or imprisoned. Men too were punished but they were more likely to be fined or sentenced to standing in the pillory (D'Emilio & Freedman).

Sexual standards for both men and women were more relaxed in the middle colonies, particularly Pennsylvania and New York. Premarital sex was an accepted practice among the Pennsylvania Dutch, and bundling, the practice of people lying in bed together either fully or partly clothed was common, especially in homes where firewood was scarce (D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988). Bundling occurred primarily between courting couples but sometimes visiting travelers would also engage in this practice as residents often took in borders for extra money, but had no extra beds in which they could sleep. Some community leaders argued that bundling led to premarital sex and illegitimate pregnancies, and should be stopped. But many others did not object to bundling and the sexual activities that accompany it, and the practice continued in the middle colonies and some rural New England communities until around 1800 (D'Emilio & Freedman).

Sexual norms in the southern colonies were largely influenced by slavery and the accompanying close proximity of blacks and whites. Southern sexual norms were also more likely to follow the less strict teachings of the Anglican Church of England, and their religious views did not prevent southern white land owners from openly experiencing a considerable amount of extramarital sexual activity. It was common for white male plantation owners to openly keep black slave and white servant women as mistresses. According to popular opinion of the time, black women were highly sexual and were thought to enjoy the attentions of their owners (D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988). White male access to slave women was viewed both as a way to maintain racial

dominance and a way to preserve the southern economic way of life which depended on planter families.

These practices also shaped the experience of southern white women's sexuality, by channeling male sexual energy away from wives and on to slaves and servants. Additionally, the presence of male slaves led to a greater perceived need to protect white women's "honor" and purity. These factors combined to shape the southern view of women as pure and in need of protection. This view was further entrenched by the geographical isolation of plantations which made courtship much more parentally controlled, and restricted married women's opportunities for finding extramarital partners, outside of their slaves. If a woman was found to have had sexual relations with a slave both were punished extremely harshly as the act represented a challenge to her husband, a threat to racial purity, and a challenge to the basic hierarchy of southern society. Different sexual standards for men and women remained after slavery was abolished as southern culture continued to value "purity" in both married and unmarried white women.

Early 1800s

As the agricultural era gave way to an industrial era, Americans were strongly influenced by a "gospel of success" and the "Protestant ethic" which viewed material success as a sign of salvation (Pleck & Pleck, 1980, p. 19). This new gospel held that any white man could achieve success and wealth through hard work and determination. The new gospel was further supported by the value system popular in Great Britain at that time. Queen Victoria reigned in Great Britain from 1837-1901. Her reign was marked by conservative values emphasizing hard work and an ascetic lifestyle. Consistent with early

Christian values, the Victorian view regarded sex as a dangerous force distracting people from work

During this time, rapid urbanization and industrialization was transforming America. With the growth of factories, business and commerce, many people shifted from an agricultural lifestyle to an urban, city-focused one. The Industrial Revolution created economic opportunities for men who did not own large tracts of land, as wealth was no longer entrenched in land-owning families who passed it down to their sons.

Although women and children initially worked in this new urban environment, eventually a philosophy of separate spheres became dominant. As production shifted to factories and away from production and trade amongst households, an increasing number of households needed to buy more of the goods they required for daily life. Families needed someone to manage the home and someone to earn money to purchase things for the home. Businesses replaced the connections between families and amongst extended family, as each family unit came to function more independently. A model of men being “in charge” of the home was gradually replaced by a “separate but equal spheres” approach to family life, with men focusing on work in the factories and businesses, and women focusing on the children and home, making the home a retreat for their weary husbands and providing a tangible sign of the man’s success (Dizard & Gadlin, 1990).

Religion shifted along with these changes and promoted separate but equal principles instead of the patriarchal principles promoted in the 18th century (Cott, 1978). According to the Protestant Church, God’s plan now called for men to be providers and women to be nurturers, and success in these roles would be rewarded by material success. Popular and religious writings encouraged men and women to be companions, to be

respectful and loving to each other, and to work hard to provide for their families in their separate spheres.

Due to the separate spheres approach, women likely had considerably more power and respect than in previous generations but at the same time, the distinction between male and female roles, and the further development of different sexual standards for men and women became more culturally ingrained. Men worked hard to provide for their families and to acquire material goods that indicated they were saved. Women subscribed to the "cult of womanhood" and strove to develop its four virtues in themselves: piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity (Cott, 1978, p. 65).

Community churches promoted these four values in women, as well as the view of women as "passionless." Writings by clergymen claimed that women were uninterested in sex, and submitted only to please their husbands. This view of women fit with the goal of reducing the level of sexual activity in the community, as passionless women could be counted on to keep male sexuality in check (Cott, 1978).

Several factors contributed to the view of women as passionless. As work moved from the home to the factory, men went to the cities to work and women stayed home but without the former responsibilities of running a farm. In adapting to this new, more leisurely role, women emulated the behaviors of upper class European women who had never experienced the hard work of farming. Part of their delicate manner was to be uninterested in sex.

Another factor in women's supposed passionlessness was the community's fear of overpopulation. Community and religious leaders warned people of the health problems associated with overpopulation, and encouraged husbands and wives to act with restraint. Since men could have sex elsewhere with lower-economic class women, the restraint

largely fell to the women. Some women welcomed this message since without birth control many women spent most of their adult life pregnant or caring for numerous children. It was not uncommon for colonial women to have fifteen to twenty children.

Fear of sexually transmitted diseases further dampened women's sexual appetites. Sexual diseases were rampant with husbands getting diseases from prostitutes and then passing them on to their wives and other prostitutes. Many women and girls were chronically ill with sexually transmitted diseases and urinary tract infections. Other health problems, unrelated to sex, were also attributed to "sexual excess" and served to further limit women's sexual activity.

The greatest barrier to women's sexual expression, however, was the nineteenth century campaign against masturbation (D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988). Previously masturbation in women had been largely ignored, in contrast to the considerable attention given to male masturbation and the "wasting of seed." But during the 18th and 19th century women were warned that masturbation would drain their body of energy and upset their mind. Masturbation was blamed for, among other things, hysteria, cramps, headaches, poor eyesight, heart palpitations, even tuberculosis and death. Some young women who expressed too much sexual interest were subjected to clitorectomy or cauterization. Although numerous doctors condemned these practices, they continued for many years. The prohibition of female masturbation set the tone for the "passionless" Victorian model of female sexuality.

Of course, women living during this time were not passionless and many enjoyed an active sex life. In 1973 historian Carl Degler found a sex study, possibly the first ever, in the archives at Stanford University. The author was Dr. Clelia Mosher, a physician employed by Stanford. Dr. Mosher interviewed 45 women born before 1870 about their

sexual experiences. Over 40% of her respondents reported that they usually or always had orgasm during intercourse. The average rate of intercourse was about five times a month. Mosher's data suggests women were both more active and more interested in sex than their passionless reputation suggests (Mosher, 1980).

The values system of the times also led to the restraint of male sexual expression and behavior. While men were not expected to be passionless they were expected to focus almost exclusively on personal development and the acquisition of wealth. Sex and intimacy were to play only a small part in their lives. These values further contributed to the distinct roles men and women were to play in romantic relationships and families. According to Rotundo (1987), character involved two components: the "Masculine Achiever" and the "Christian Gentleman."

The "Masculine Achiever" should be active and decisive and emotionally independent. Men were encouraged to spend their waking hours acquiring wealth and respected positions in the community. Men should support their families, but not be too involved with the female activities of nurturing or caring for the mundane needs of family members.

The admired man was also supposed to be a "Christian Gentleman," charitable and proper to women, children and others less fortunate than himself. Christian Gentlemen were supposed to be in control of their sexual urges. Sex was only for procreation as unnecessary sex could drain men of the energy they needed for work. Sperm was thought to be man's "life force" and therefore should not be wasted. This standard applied to both married and single men—neither should waste energy on sex when it could be better applied to the business world.

Although men were thought to have urges which needed to be restrained, passionless women could be counted on to control men's urges. For those times when male sexuality could not be contained, red light districts developed where men could visit prostitutes. The justification for tolerating these areas was that they protected "good" women from men who could not control themselves. The red light districts enabled professional Victorian men to be Christian Gentlemen to women of their own class, while acting on their sexual impulses with women from a lower economic class.

When a "Christian Gentlemen" found a woman suitable for marriage he would "call" upon her at her home. The gentleman would give his card to a servant at the door and ask to see the young woman he was interested in. If she came downstairs to meet him, he knew she liked him. If his visits were repeatedly rejected, he knew she was not interested. The rules of courting gave women and parents control over who the women saw and what took place during their meetings.

If the young woman and her parents thought the caller was suitable, the couple would be allowed to go out together, usually with a chaperone. As the relationship progressed the couple was allowed some privacy so they could engage in intimate activities. Such activities were allowed so long as parents and chaperones continued to believe the man's intentions were honorable (i.e., he intended to marry her).

These Victorian-type values remained pervasive until around the 1860s when changing living and work conditions, as well as evolving views of appropriate behavior for men and women, altered the work and social landscape for young men and women.

Progressive Era 1860s-1920s

According to Scanzoni (1995), the Progressive Era was a time of unbounded optimism, with the exception of the WWI years from 1914-1918. Many people were

behaving in progressive ways, trying to reinvent ways of thinking and living. Values were evolving as well, as the qualities of self-control, discipline, and delayed gratification became less desirable as America industrialized and became more consumer-focused. The independent, self-made man whose livelihood came from the land or the community was now more likely to work in the business world as a bureaucrat or in middle management.

Work opportunities also changed for women. By the early 1900s middle class women had an increasing presence in higher education, the labor force, and feminist and reform politics. What Gadlin calls “radical feminists” of the time suggested women could find fulfillment through work. While not dismissing the fulfillment found through home and family, they suggested meaningful employment led to greater “self-actualization,” which became a popular expression and discussion topic among women in the 1920s (Gadlin, 1977).

Since the turn of the century, increasing numbers of white, middle-class women had been entering the labor force. Most of these women viewed their work as temporary, and planned to leave the workforce after marriage. Despite the dramatic changes of this period, men were still expected to be good providers and were rewarded with social status and the “best” women. The majority of women still aspired to “catch” a good man and to focus their life’s work on homemaking and mothering

Courtship patterns were also transformed during this time. After about 1910, the traditional courting system was replaced by dating and coed gatherings in sexually-charged environments such as bars and dance halls (Dizard & Gadlin, 1990). “Calling” became inappropriate as families lived in urban apartments with only a few rooms. Instead, young people met at movie theaters and dance halls and other places that

emphasized fun and adventure. Dating eventually developed as the most convenient mode of courtship.

With the switch from calling to dating, courtship was transformed from a female and parent controlled system, to one largely controlled by men who both initiated and paid for dates. Men now enjoyed greater power in shaping the course of the date, but were also confused by changing social norms and roles which now emphasized "performance" instead of restraint and respect and a clouding of the line between "good" and "bad" women (Rotundo, 1987). Women had more freedom to engage in intimate activity, but virginity was still prized in women, and women knew they could be "damaged goods" if known to have had sex with a boyfriend. Men and women could "pet" and "neck" but women were expected to "hold the line" if men tried to advance activities towards sex.

Under this new set of norms, men were expected to be gentlemanly, but also to express themselves as virile men. Changing women's roles during this time led women to be more assertive, so men had to be increasingly dominant to retain control. The male should be a "healthy animal," responsive to women but unafraid of their natural urges. Whereas Victorians saw male sexual needs as a weakness, the new ideal asserted male sexual needs as a strength.

The view of women as passionless also fell out of favor during the early 1900s. The new popular thinking suggested that Victorian sexual constraints were unnatural and many women rejected the role of sexual gatekeeper and instead asserted their right to explore their own sexuality (Israel, 2002). As one woman noted, "Of late there has been much public discussion of the wantonness of modern youth; which, being interpreted,

means the disposition of our girls to take the same liberty of indulgence in prenuptial sexual affairs that has always been countenanced in boys." (Israel, 2002, p. 21).

The 1920s flapper captured the image of the ideal woman: young, pretty, and sexual, with a desire to work in the public world, at least for a while. Work and socializing were for "experience." When the right man came along she would adopt a more traditional lifestyle. The flapper scorned the woman who did not have a job and assert her independence, but also the dedication of female activists and professionals who avoided the roles of wife and mother (Israel, 2002).

The flapper dated often and may have engaged in premarital sex with several men before marrying. But her sexual experiences were usually in the context of a relationship, and usually with the hope that it would lead to marriage. The flappers' sexuality and independence were recognized and appreciated but they were warned not to go too far with either (Israel, 2002). Still, the flapper was symbolic of a dramatic shift in sexual values in just one generation: women born after 1900 were two and a half times as likely to have had premarital sex than women born before 1900, though it is likely much of this premarital activity took place after the couple became engaged. Though behaviors had changed, it is important to note the ideal, especially for women, remained sex in the context of marriage (Christenson, 1964). As for men, the year of their birth made little difference in the incidence of premarital sex. Ninety-eight percent of men with a grade school education had had premarital sex, 85% of men with a high school education, and 68% of men with some college experience (Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, & Gehard, 1953).

Sex was also thought to be a more important component of marriage than was previously the case. Companionate marriage became the ideal, with sexual and emotional closeness being the hallmarks of a good marriage (Dizard & Gadlin, 1990). Many

thought that birth control should be widely available to help men and women enjoy marital sexuality. As the discourse changed towards a more accepting view of women's sexuality, married women demanded artificial forms of birth control that would enable them to control their fertility, while enjoying their sexuality with their husbands.

All of these changing ideals led to a proliferation of popular and scientific writing on sexuality during the early 1900s. Scientists were now speaking and writing about the origins and appropriate expression of male and female sexuality. Two European men were particularly influential in shaping public and academic opinion about sexuality, Havelock Ellis and Sigmund Freud.

Havelock Ellis (1926), an English psychologist and physician laid the groundwork for 20th century thinking about sex with his work *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*. He suggested that women were interested in sex at least as much as men, but women had a more complex sexuality with more points of arousal. He suggested women might even be more interested in sex than men because of their potential for greater physiological response. Sigmund Freud (1931/1962) was also instrumental in shaping our thoughts about women's sexuality, and many of his ideas are still used by practitioners today. Freud agreed women were more sexual than previously thought, but he saw their sexuality as pathological. He believed psychologically healthy women were innately passive and submissive.

Although both Freud and Ellis rejected many of the Victorian views of women's sexuality, they both clung to the idea that women's sexuality was passive and required a man to activate it. This view persisted and largely shaped the sexual beliefs and norms of that time, despite the attitudes and actions of the sexual revolutionaries of the 1920s,

many of whom asserted that women's sexuality was more active and self-directed than the Victorians or the scientists suggested.

But despite lingering aspects of Victorian values, the change in views of what was acceptable sexual and dating behavior for men and women was remarkable during this time. Most researchers agree the changes brought about in the 1920s “mini-revolution” were a precursor and laid the foundation for the “sexual revolution” of the 1960s (Reiss, 1960, 1990; Rubin, 1990).

The Great Depression

The Depression was also a major contributor to the liberalization of norms surrounding premarital sex (Modell, 1989). During the 1920s couples established a norm of brief engagements, as once committing they were eager to make sex a legitimate part of their relationship. But during the Depression, couples were forced to have longer engagements as the men sought work and the ability to support a family. But during this time, the vast majority of men were not able to find work and engagements became increasingly longer. The result, according to Modell, was a fundamental change in the sexual negotiations and expectations of engaged couples, as women had difficulty managing their own and their fiancé's desire for sex. As a result, rates of premarital sex increased in the 1930s and continued to increase even after the economy stabilized. The Depression, it seems, served to change the expectations, at least among engaged couples, of premarital chastity, even though the ideal remained waiting until after marriage (Modell).

The Depression affected views of appropriate roles for women in other ways. With few jobs available, the idea of a woman holding a job fell out of favor, and any progress in this area made during the early part of the century was essentially turned back. Distinct

roles for men and women returned, at least in an ideal sense, since many men could not be providers during this difficult economic time.

From WWII to The Golden Age of the Family: 1940s and 1950s

During the period from 1941-1945 many women went to work in factories to replace the men who were away fighting in WWII. Women earned higher wages than in more traditionally female jobs, and daycare centers were built on site so women could be close to their children and visit them on breaks. When the men returned from the war, however, the women were expected to leave their jobs and take their children home. Rubin (1990) suggests that after the challenges of WWII and the temporary upheaval in gender roles and family life, there was a return to strong and conservative family values of marriage and traditional gender roles—a return to a separate spheres approach.

According to Modell (1989), women's patriotic duty now consisted of going home and being good mothers and wives to their returning good providers. Men returned from the war to a time of prosperity and economic and educational opportunity, with the government offering subsidized college tuition and home mortgages. Men and women believed the men could fulfill the role of good provider, leaving the women free to focus on homemaking and family. All these factors made marriage seem like a good idea and the "right" thing to do.

For unmarried women the return to traditional values meant that women were supposed to adopt their former position as sexual gatekeeper. This proved to be a difficult task because even though premarital virginity was idealized, engaging in a variety of sexual activities shy of intercourse had become a routine part of the dating rituals, with many couples engaging in intercourse prior to marriage (Rubin, 1990).

Using the same language as Dizard and Gadlin (1990) in describing the “dating game” of 1920s and 1930s, Rubin describes the environment for women pursuing relationships and marriage in the 1950s. Young women were taught that their “good name” was the key to marriage and a place in the community. A woman’s reputation as someone who did or did not have sex was the most important determinant of both whom she would date in high school and who would marry her. The typical script among dating couples called for the boys to try and get as far as they could, with the girls allowing enough to keep the boys interested, but not enough to ruin their reputation. This “game” was further complicated by pressure from the peer group to keep or push the “line.” While women’s friends usually wanted her to “hold the line” so as to preserve her good reputation, the man’s friends wanted him to “push the line” to prove his manhood within the group (Rubin, 1990). Sexual relations were not kept between the couple, but rather were shared, and judged, by both the men’s and women’s peers (Rubin, 1990). Unfortunately, while the boys all desired a virgin for a wife, they wanted to have sex with the girls they dated. And just as the girls’ reputation hinged on not having sex, the boys’ reputation was determined by how many women they could have sex with (Rubin, 1990).

Interestingly, this game depended on the combined force of female economic dependence on men, different sexual standards for men and women, and on marriage as the ultimate prize for women—essentially the same values that have governed women’s lives since Hebraic times. Notwithstanding several thousand years of historical change and development in other areas of society, these same forces remained salient, and their impact quite practical and real for women throughout the 1950s.

Theoretical Context Pre-1960

Several sociological and economic theories help to explain the cultural context in which women have experienced their sexuality and relationships with men prior to the 1960s. At root is a long-held belief that the smooth functioning of society is dependent upon men and women holding complementary (as opposed to competitive) roles thereby compelling them to join forces in marriage. Sociological and economic theories illuminate the connections between women's financial dependence on men, differing sexual standards for men and women, and the belief that marriage and male and female role specialization (which assigned women to a homemaker role and men to a financial provider role) are necessary to society's smooth functioning. These theories explain how such roles, values, and behavioral expectations become reified, scripted, and transmitted to future generations through a variety of cultural mediators.

This section will review structural/functionalist theory (SF), initially discussed by Durkheim (1933/1964) in the form of interdependence theory, but more commonly associated with the writings of Talcott Parsons (1949, 1955). The SF perspective holds that society is ordered through families and that families are run smoothly when men and women hold complementary and noncompetitive roles. It is believed that Parson's structural/functionalist perspective of the nuclear family continues to shape the research agenda of family sociology, despite evidence that a majority of families do not fit or possibly support his model of family life and role segregation for men and women (Rice, 1994; Scanzoni & Kingsbury, 2003; Scanzoni & Marsiglio, 1993).

Related to Parson's ideas is the work of Gary Becker (1973, 1974), an economist who suggested men and women are motivated to enter relationships by what they can "gain" from that relationship, over and above what they can supply for themselves. He

suggests that role specialization increases the “gain” to marriage that people can achieve; and without it, people are less likely to marry.

Next, is a review of sociologists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman’s (1996) theory of the social construction of reality. This theory posits that mental concepts, such as the family, can become reified (i.e., viewed as something “real”) and can profoundly influence people’s behavior. This is followed by a discussion of scripting theory that highlights how reified concepts, such as the family, lead to the development of role expectations for men and women such as those related to sexuality and marriage, which are transmitted and reproduced by subsequent generations.

Structural-Functionalist Theory

Social science literature has long emphasized the importance of differentiated and specialized sex roles to social integration and stability. In *The Division of Labor in Society*, Durkheim (1933/1964) argued that there are two kinds of social solidarity—one based on similarity (mechanical solidarity), the other on the interdependence produced by the division of labor (organic solidarity). While he mainly applied these concepts to occupational differentiation and its effect on social integration in the larger society, Durkheim used a sexual division of labor as an example of organic solidarity, stating that,

the most remarkable effect of the division of labor is not that it increases the output functions divided, but that it renders them solidary. . . . Permit the sexual division of labor to recede below a certain level and conjugal society would eventually subsist in sexual relations preeminently ephemeral. . . . It is possible that the economic utility of the division of labor may have a hand in this, but in any case, it passes far beyond purely economic interests, for it consists in the establishment of a social and moral order sui generis. Through it, individuals are linked to one another. Without it, they would be independent. (pp. 60-61).

Building on Durkheim's (1933/1964) theory of interdependence, Talcott Parsons (1949) argued that sex-role segregation is a functional necessity not only for marital stability, but also for societal stability. Parsons believed that the family is the main unit of society and that societal norms need to encourage individuals to enter marital relationships both for their own benefit, and for the benefit of society.

Parsons view of divergent gender roles was influenced by Freud's deterministic ideas about men and women, and the notion that "anatomy equals destiny" (Scanzoni & Kingsbury, 2003, p. 1580). Parsons maintained that role specialization is the most important mechanism preventing damaging, perhaps destructive competition between husband and wife, he writes "it is scarcely conceivable that the main lines of the [husband's and wife's roles] could be altered without consequences fatal to the total of our unique society" (Parsons, 1949, p. 268). Parsons believed strong social pressure was necessary to prevent individuals from making their own behavioral choices, believing they would act in a self-interested manner harmful to society. By conforming to strong social pressures to maintain a family and follow specific gender roles, men and women would raise healthy children. One of the "functions" of the family was to train, or socialize, children into adopting their gender-specific roles and continuing the cycle of family as adults. By conforming to these roles, families—through the actions of parents and children—ordered society. Parsons believed conformity was the root of an ordered society and that failure to conform would result in disorder and significant social problems.

Economic Choice Theory

More recently, the idea that sex-differentiated roles have an integrative and stabilizing function in the family has been elaborated in the work of economist Gary

Becker (1974, 1981). Becker's (1981) economic theory of marriage hypothesized that women's increasing labor force participation has had an enormous impact on men's and women's relationship choices, marriage formation and subsequent family dynamics, child bearing, and marital stability. Becker suggested that unmarried men and women are like trading partners, each hoping to "gain" the most from the trade of their services, in exchange for the services of a marital partner. Couples marry because they have more to gain from marrying than from remaining single (not trading). He argued that the major gain to marriage arises out of the mutual dependence between spouses that results from each specializing in certain functions—the woman in domestic activities, including childbearing, and the man in paid work. Marriage then involves trading the rewards and benefits of these different skills. If partners overlap in their roles and skills, the gains to marriage are reduced, thus reducing the desirability of the traditional family model.

Becker's (1981) theory has been highly influential on researchers holding widely varying views, and it has been suggested that some form of this theory, whether or not identified as economic choice theory, can be seen in almost all recent discussions of marriage formation and the effects of female labor force participation—regardless of whether recent changes are viewed as positive or negative (Oppenheimer & Lew, 1995).

Historically, social support for role specialization led to different "career" paths for men and women. To insure financial security, men needed to develop skills which were economically rewarded, and the better they were at these skills, the more the degree to which they fulfilled their expected role, and the more desirable a potential marital partner they would be. Women also needed to excel in their role of becoming an attractive marital partner if they wanted to insure their future economic security, and that of any children they hoped to have. For women, achieving economic security was linked to

succeeding in becoming a proper woman, which included, among other things, remaining or appearing “sexually pure.” As discussed in the next subpart, social constructions and social scripts developed to guide women and men in fulfilling their socially prescribed roles.

Scripting Theory and the Social Construction of Reality

While SF and economic choice theory highlight the societal function of marriage and distinct gender roles, scripting theory addresses how gender roles and behavioral norms become reified, scripted, and transmitted to future generations. In order to understand scripting theory, it must first be understood how individual roles and behavioral norms are socially constructed.

In the area of human sexuality, popular wisdom often assumes sexual beliefs and behaviors emanate from instinctive drives or hormones, as has been found in some animal communities. For example, salmon are known to be hormonally programmed to swim upstream and gather together during optimal periods for mating. Human sexual behavior, however, cannot be explained solely by hormonal factors. Many social scientists suggest a person’s sexual behavior and beliefs reflect the values of the culture in which they were raised (Gagnon & Simon, 1973; Laumann et al., 1994; Long-Laws & Schwartz, 1977; Reiss, 1960, 1986, 1990). Individuals live in communities and through these communities, our notions of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors are transmitted from one generation to another. As individuals are socialized into their culture and subculture, they learn what is expected of them and how they are supposed to behave (Berger & Luckman, 1966).

According to Berger and Luckman (1966), humans develop behavior patterns through modeling, repetition, and routinization. When people repeatedly confront a task

or situation, they develop routines for managing that situation that make subsequent encounters easier. Roles are assigned to people, and with each role, particular tasks are assigned. Over time, these arrangements become accepted and anticipated and appear inevitable. In this way, individual behavior becomes socially constructed.

Society then reaffirms these social constructions and discredits competing views through the two mechanisms of community and language (Berger & Luckman, 1966). These two mechanisms function to maintain subjective reality of a particular social construction. First, as new people are brought into society, their community teaches the rules of a particular construction through interaction with other members of the community. Social constructions, and their accompanying roles and rules, appear to people as natural and unalterable. Next, the power of language further cements “natural” roles and rules by labeling these constructions as “just the way things are supposed to be,” “normal,” and “appropriate.” Social constructions accepted as normal and appropriate serve an important purpose in ordering society.

The powerful combined forces of community and language, which institutionalize normal and appropriate societal roles and rules are invisible, or as Berger and Luckman (1966) suggest, “opaque” (p. 96). Working in the background, these opaque forces help to move individuals through interactions without requiring negotiation at each step. The opaque forces of community and language make our daily interactions more efficient. Interactions progress more smoothly when people accept the roles they are expected to play as natural and do not question whether there could be any other way.

While the opaque forces of community and language make human interaction less complicated, they also make alternatives less obvious as people assume things are the way they are for some unknown but important reason. The power of community and

language build as societies develop, with each generation further strengthening the importance, weight, and relevance of these invisible forces. Through this process, behaviors and beliefs become socially constructed (Berger & Luckman, 1966).

Over time, certain constructions become entrenched as normal and appropriate and the expected language and behavior choices are reduced to scripts that individuals come to rely on like actors in a play (Schank & Abelson, 1977). These scripts then shape individuals' experience of the scripted activity. For example, when two people meet for the first time, mental expectations of how that interaction should proceed guide the two people in what they should say and do.

Sexual scripting theory is based on these broader concepts of social construction and social scripts. Sexual scripting theory addresses how sexual roles and routines develop, and how people learn what to expect from sexual encounters (Gagnon & Simon, 1973; Laumann et al., 1994; Long-Laws & Schwartz, 1977; Reiss, 1986; Schwartz & Rutter, 1998, Simon & Gagnon, 1986). According to Simon and Gagnon (1973), sexual scripts are those mental constructions that relate to the sequence of events that arise from, explain, and accomplish sexual activity. Sexual scripts are

involved in learning the meaning of internal states, organizing the sequences of specifically sexual acts, decoding novel situations, setting the limits on sexual responses, and linking meaning from nonsexual aspects of life to specifically sexual experience (Simon & Gagnon, 1973, p. 19).

Sexual scripting theory is based on several assumptions about sexual beliefs and behavior (Laumann et al., 1994; Simon & Gagnon, 1986). First, scripting theory assumes biological instincts play a minor role in determining what a person feels is appropriate behavior, or how they behave. Second, appropriate beliefs and behaviors are developed and passed on at the community level. Different communities have their own definition

of what is considered sexual or sexually attractive. Cultures and communities also have different ways of enforcing or encouraging their particular model of sexual behavior.

Third, individuals receive a constant flow of information about what the culture considers appropriate and inappropriate. This information is conveyed by cultural mediators, including parents, religious leaders, educators, and media figures. As the culture changes and scripts evolve, cultural mediators alter the message and pass on new understandings and ideals. Fourth, people modify their culture's script to suit their personal beliefs, temperament, and preferences. Individuals may attempt to alter a particular script, possibly because they realize how the script limits personal freedom or because the script does not fit with their self-perception (Laumann et al., 1994).

Sexual scripts exert influence on behavior and beliefs at three levels: cultural, interpersonal, and intrapsychic (Laumann et al., 1994; Simon & Gagnon, 1986). At the first level, cultural scripts are presented by the media and through cultural customs. Cultural scripts indicate to people how they should behave, what their goals should be, and what constitutes acceptable sexual behavior. This script is presented through popular media and conventional wisdom and is passed on through friends, peers, and family members. At the second level, interpersonal scripts emerge when cultural level scripts are enacted by individuals. Interpersonal scripts include the specific ways people are expected to act in sexual encounters and the assigning of particular roles. The roles assigned by the interpersonal level script make encounters less ambiguous as individuals fulfill their assigned role. At the third level, intrapsychic scripts develop in the context of cultural and interpersonal scripts, but also include the individual's sense of themselves as a sexual being, and their understanding of the moral and personal implications of sexual activity (Laumann et al., 1994; Simon & Gagnon, 1986).

Taken together, cultural, interpersonal, and intrapsychic scripts present a plan for an individual's behavior in sexual or potentially sexual encounters. Each person's script may vary slightly, but typically, members of the same culture or subculture are subject to the same scripts and therefore share an understanding of what constitutes appropriate behavior. Widely shared scripts facilitate encounters by providing people with shared understandings and similar expectations.

Looked at together, structural/functionalist theory, economic choice theory, and scripting theory explain how women's roles and their motivations and expectations for their relationships remained consistent for such a long period of time. SF theory and economic choice theory highlight the societal emphasis on role segregation for men and women that, in most cases, resulted in female economic dependence on men and perpetuated the need for women to marry. Scripting theory explains how societal values related to women's sexual behavior, and the connection between women's behavior and their ability to marry and thus find economic security, shape women's sexuality and pursuit of relationships. These powerful and tenacious theories continue to influence current research on relationships and family and sexuality. These theories rely on a "fixed" view of culture and human interaction, that is, they rely on people reproducing roles and institutions without question or attempts at innovation. Theorists who believe people's actions and roles are not so static, and that people are constantly engaging in new behaviors and developing new adaptations to roles, sometimes refer to this static view of culture and social life as "old action" (Alexander, 1988). While such old action theories held considerable explanatory power during the historical period just described (although clearly people engaged in adaptations during this time), we may now be at a time when adaptation and innovation are the norm, rather than reproduction.

Post-1960s Context

The social context in which women make decisions regarding their sexual behavior and erotic friendships has changed dramatically in the last forty years. As discussed above, prior to 1960, women's behavior and choices were made in a world that placed great importance on distinct roles for men and women, held few opportunities for women to achieve economic independence, emphasized the societal importance of the family, and maintained a prohibition on sex before marriage for women.

One of the most lasting effects of the social movements of the 1960s was the idea of personal choice and control over one's destiny (Scanzoni, 1995). Women were asserting their right to such control in the 1960s and 1970s, and their efforts were rewarded both through legislation and changed societal views. For example, before the 1960s, few people would be willing to say premarital sex was a legitimate choice for women. But the sixties marked the beginning of the end of the Dating Game and notions of female sexual purity, which for so long had shaped women's pursuit of romantic relationships. Alongside changing views about women's sexuality was a refocusing on women's right to seek fulfillment and economic independence through paid work. The women's movement, which had remained largely dormant since achieving the vote for women in the 1920s, was reawakened by women who thought notions of control and choice were applicable to their lives. In particular, Betty Friedan's (1963) book, *The Feminine Mystique* captured a sense of malaise apparently experienced by many women who found home and family to be not quite enough to make them feel complete.

Since the 1960s the social context shaping women's experience of erotic friendships has changed in three interrelated areas: (a) there is decreased stigma associated with premarital sex for women; (b) there are increased opportunities for

women to achieve financial independence without marriage; and (c) alternatives to living in a traditional family with traditional gender roles are more common and less stigmatized. Additionally, the development of the birth control pill, abortion-rights legislation, and no-fault divorce laws (designed to make divorce easier and to eliminate the notion of marriage as a form of lifelong financial support for women) all interacted to change the factors shaping women's pursuit of romantic relationships in the 1960s and beyond. This part of the chapter describes some of the changes in the cultural context of the last 40 years and highlights the need for identification of, and new explanations for, women's views of and experiences with erotic friendships.

Decreased Stigma for Premarital Sex for Women

During the 1960s and 1970s, men's and women's views about female sexuality underwent many changes, perhaps the most dramatic being a reduction in the stigma associated with premarital sex for women. According to Rubin, women's virginity went from something to be preserved, to a "problem" to be solved by one (or more) of many willing partners (Rubin, 1990). Research in the years after the sexual and gender revolutions demonstrate that both sexual attitudes and behaviors changed significantly from pre-1960s levels.

Recent research suggests that women's sexual behavior patterns are becoming increasingly similar to that of men's. The National Health and Social Life Survey (NHSLS) is the largest and most comprehensive sex survey conducted since the Kinsey studies of the 1940s and 1950s. This research included a random sample of 3000 respondents across the United States. The authors of the study suggest that one of the most remarkable findings to come from the NHSLS is that women born between 1963-1972 are twice as likely as women born just 10 years earlier to have had multiple sex

partners by age 18. These women are almost 6 times as likely to report multiple partners by 18 than were women born between 1943-1952 (Laumann et al., 1994).

Similarly, the 1995 National Survey on Family Growth (NSFG) found that 69% of women married between 1965-1974 had premarital sex, compared with 89% of those who married in the 1990s. Many assumed that AIDS would curtail women's sexual experimentation and reverse the trend toward more male-like behavior, but researchers have concluded the main behavioral change for women due to AIDS is increased condom usage and willingness to initiate condom use (Kamen, 2000; Laumann et al., 1994).

Findings from the NHLS and the NSFG suggest that women now share men's pattern of early sexual and relationship experimentation with several partners, followed by a period of cohabitation prior to their first marriage. In reviewing the research on women's sexual and relationship patterns, the authors of the NHLS conclude, "A more general pattern of young women's sexual experiences becoming somewhat more like men's seems to be emerging" (Laumann et al., 1994: 310).

In addition to changed behavior, views about sex also changed. Previous generations, even those whose behavior became more permissive in the 1960s and 1970s, still condemned premarital sex and had doubts about the appropriateness of their behavior (Reiss, 1990; Rubin, 1990). This kind of doubt is less common today, with attitudes being more in sync with behavior (Kamen, 2000). For example, of women questioned by the Roper Organization for the Virginia Slims opinion poll in 1970, 30% agreed that, "single women should not enjoy the same kind of sexual freedom as men" (Roper Starch Worldwide, 2000). In 1990, 16% held that attitude. Similarly, after reviewing research on views held by college students, sex researcher Susan Sprecher concluded that the sexual standards endorsed for males are very similar to those for

females.” (Sprecher, 1989, p. 245). In reviewing research measuring men’s and women’s levels of sexual permissiveness, Kamen concluded that men’s permissiveness levels have decreased slightly since the 1970s, partly due to AIDS. Women’s levels increased from the mid-1960s through the 1980s, eroded slightly in the 1980s, but then continued increasing as women were influenced by their growing social and economic power (Kamen, 2000). Finally, the similarity between male and female responses was reported as the most significant finding of UCLA’s 1997 report: *American Freshman: Thirty Year Trends* (Astin, Parrott, Korn, & Sax, 1997). The authors of the report found a reduction in what had previously been the largest gap between male and female views: the view toward casual sex. In 1996, 31.9% of females and 53.8% of males agreed it was okay for men and women to have sex if they like each other but have only known each other for a short time.

The trend toward more permissive attitudes and behaviors is also evident in research on cohabitation. Cohabitation has gone from rare and deviant behavior to the majority experience among cohorts of marriageable age (Bumpass & Sweet, 1989; Thornton, 1989). From 1965-1974, approximately 10% of marriages were preceded by cohabitation. By 1980, about 50% of marriages were preceded by cohabitation. For marriages begun between 1990 and 1994, 56% were preceded by cohabitation. By 1995, approximately 25% of unmarried women between the ages of 25 and 39 had lived with an unmarried partner (Nagourney, 2000). The 2000 Census reported that 5.5 million couples were living together but not married. These unmarried-partner households were self-identified on the census form as being maintained by people who were sharing living quarters and who also maintained a close personal relationship with each other [people

who were living together to save money on expenses were able to identify themselves as roommates or housemates] (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000).

Rising education rates for women also influence women's sexual behavior and beliefs. Smith (1994) and Fillion (1996) found that as women's educational attainment increases, so does their level of sexual permissiveness, and the degree to which their behavioral profile is similar to men's. The 1993 Janus Report on Sexual Behavior (Janus & Janus, 1993) found that college-educated women report more gratification in their sexuality, are more aware of a sexual double standard, are more likely to initiate sexual activity, and have more premarital sexual experience than women who do not attend college. The NHSLs found that both women and men with higher levels of education were likely to have more partners over a lifetime. The authors of the study concluded this was because most men and women postpone marriage until after completing their education and thus those with more education spent more years dating (Laumann et al., 1994).

Increased Opportunities for Financial Independence

In addition to a decreased stigma related to premarital sex, women's views of and experiences with EFs have also been changed by increased opportunities for women to achieve financial independence. According to Census data, beginning in the late 1990s, women's educational achievement surpassed those of men at all levels, except those earning doctorates. In 1997 the Census bureau reported that 89.6% of women aged 25 to 29 had finished high school, compared with 86% of men; 29% of women had completed college, compared with 26% of men. The number of women receiving PhD's increased by more than 50% in the last decade, with women receiving 40.6% of doctoral degrees. In 1998, more female than male high school graduates enrolled in college, though there

were more male high school graduates than female high school graduates. The rate of college enrollment for females was 69.1% while only 62.4% of males enrolled (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1998).

With increased educational opportunities, came an increase in the number of women working outside the home. While women began entering the labor force in large numbers in the 1940s, their participation experienced a jump in the 1950s. At that time, one in three women participated in the labor force (Fullerton, 1999).

The women's movement encouraged women to get an education and to work, both for personal satisfaction and for economic independence. Such promotion of school and work as good for women went against 1950s Freudian-type sentiments that suggested women's proper place was in the home and that career-oriented women were somehow "damaged." Legal developments in the 1960s and 1970s also facilitated women's increased labor force participation by establishing, at least as a value if not always in practice, the equal treatment of women in the workplace. The Equal Pay Act of 1963, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, and the Equal Opportunity Commission's Guidelines on Sexual Harassment in 1980 all focused attention on the challenges faced by female workers and eventually lessened the amount of discriminatory treatment experienced by women. As a result of these changes, women's labor force participation reached 41.7% in 1978 (Fullerton, 1999).

In the 1980s, women's labor force participation continued to grow but at slower levels than in the 1960s and 1970s. By the early 1990s it reached a plateau of 57.2%, but in 1994 it started to climb, reaching an all-time high in 2000 of 60% of women participating in the labor market (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002; Hayghe, 1997). Female labor force participation is currently 57.6% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003).

Perhaps most significantly, women's labor force participation is now more steady and more similar to men's. In the years after WWII, the majority of the women in the workforce were under 25, and most quit when they had children. Now the greatest labor force participation is by women in their 30s and 40s, with 8 in 10 women in this age group in the workforce (Hayghe, 1997; Hertz & Wooten, 1996).

In recent years, women's share of employment in occupations typified by high earnings has grown. In 1983, 34.2% of women were employed in full-time, executive, administration, and management positions; in 2001, this percentage jumped to 47.1% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002). The earning gap between men and women also decreased significantly during this time. In 1979 women's median weekly earnings were 63% of their male counterparts. In 2001, women's median weekly earnings (\$511) represent 76% of their male counterparts (\$672) (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002).

Alternatives to Traditional Gender and Family Roles

In addition to the impact of increased opportunities for women to achieve financial independence and decreased stigma associated with premarital sex, the cultural context shaping women's pursuit of romantic relationships has changed due to changing views and behaviors related to gender roles, marriage and the traditional family.

Census data support the declining prevalence of the traditional family model. As author of a 1996 Census report on the status of the American family, author Ken Bryson (1996a) states,

significant changes in American household and family composition have occurred in the past 25 years with a smaller proportion of two-parent families with children . . . childless couples, single-parent families and people living alone have become increasingly common . . . the increasing diversity of household types continue to challenge our efforts to measure and describe American society. The 'typical' household is an illusion. (Bryson, 1996b)

Some data points from this report illustrate his point:

- In 1970, married couples with children made up 40% of households; in 1995, this number fell to 25%.
- In 1970, people living alone made up one-sixth of households; in 1995, people living alone made up one-fourth of households. (Bryson, 1996a, p. 1)

People living alone were the fastest growing category of households in the 1990s, and now outnumber married households with children (This change is not due to widowed seniors living longer, people over 65 were no more likely to live alone in 2000 than in 1990; Goldstein & Kenney, 2002). The 2000 Census reported that 56% of women who lived alone, owned their own home.

Female marital behavior has also changed. Women's median age at first marriage has risen by 4 years over the last 30 years, from 20.8 in 1970 to 25.1 in 2000, or phrased differently, cohorts coming of age since 1970 are marrying later than the cohorts preceding them. Age-specific marriage rates have fallen since the 1970s (National Center for Health Statistics, 1996). The rate of marriage among single women aged 20 to 24 fell 55% from 1970 to 1988, while the rate for women aged 30 to 34 fell 16% over same period. In the past 30 years the number of 30 to 34-year-old women who have not married has more than tripled, from 6% in 1970 to 22% in 2000 (National Marriage Project, 2000; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000).

The changing significance of marriage can also be observed in behaviors following unplanned pregnancies. Census bureau data suggest people are now less likely to marry in the event of an unplanned pregnancy. In the 1960s, approximately 60% of unplanned pregnancies resulted in the parents marrying. In the 1990s only a third chose to marry. Women are also increasingly open to the possibility of having and raising children on their own, by choice. In a 1996 Roper/Virginia Slim poll, one third of women said if they

were single and nearing end of childbearing years, they would consider having child on own. The National Marriage Project 2000 (described further below), which surveyed 1003 married and unmarried men and women between 20 and 29, found that 40% of respondents feel that adults who choose to raise children out of wedlock are “doing their own thing.”

The cultural context has also been altered by a significant increase in the likelihood of divorce and the passage of no-fault divorce laws. Since 1970, the divorce rate has doubled, reaching the point where one of every two marriages is expected to end in divorce (Castro & Bumpass, 1989; Popenoe, 1996). Though the rate of increase in divorce slowed through the 1990s, there are few indications the directional trend will reverse (Popenoe, 1996). No-fault divorce laws were developed in the 1970s to make marital dissolution easier and decrease the stigma associated with divorce, and to put an end to the notion of marriage as a form of lifelong financial support. Under these laws, men and women are presumed to be (generally) equally capable of providing for themselves and their children; and one has to prove if there is a reason why this is not so, such as an extended period of time out of the workplace, outdated skills, or illness. In cases where a reason can be shown, some form of temporary, or rehabilitative support may be provided. Cases where lifelong support is granted are increasingly rare and are usually awarded only in long-term marriages. No-fault laws are now in effect, to some degree, in all states; though Louisiana recently enacted legislation designed to make divorce more difficult and, presumably, lower the divorce rate. Still, the well-publicized, though sometimes exaggerated, results of these laws send the clear message that females put themselves and their dependent children at risk if they assume their husband will be financially responsible for them in the event of divorce.

A study by The National Marriage Project [NMP] (2000) highlights the impact of divorce and no-fault divorce laws, on men's and women's views and expectations related to marriage. The NMP is an academic and advocacy organization, housed at Rutgers University and supervised by sociologists and demographers, which studies relationship and marital trends with the goal of finding ways to strengthen the institution of marriage. The NMP study cited here included a random, statistically representative sample of 1003 men and women aged 20 to 29, both single and married. Results from the NMP study suggest the possibility of divorce weighs strongly on people's minds, whether or not they are currently married:

- 68% believe it is more difficult to have a good marriage today than in their parent's generation.
- 52% agree that one sees so few good or happy marriages that they question it as a way of life.
- 52% of single respondents say their main concern with marriage is the possibility of divorce.
- Due to fear of divorce, 82% of female respondents believe it is unwise for a woman to rely on marriage for financial security.
- 78% of respondents say couples should not marry unless they plan to stay together forever. 6% believe it is unlikely they will stay married to their first spouse for life.

Behavioral norms have also changed regarding women's options for remaining single. Prior to the 1960s there was a strong and negative stigma associated with remaining single beyond the early 20s; the question was not "if" but "when" a woman would marry (Lewis, 1994, p. 117). Single women in their 30s were generally viewed as unfortunate or suspicious. A study of single women conducted in the 1950s showed that women remained single primarily for negative reasons, for example, dislike of men or feeling unattractive (Kuhn, 1955). In the 1960s Helen Gurley Brown, publisher of

Cosmopolitan, used her magazine to suggest that marriage should be one lifestyle option for women to choose from, and that women could find satisfaction through work, dating and friendship. Her work supported the themes of the women's movement and the sexual revolution, which all contributed to changing views of women's lifestyle options. These changes took hold in society, and by the 1970s studies suggested people felt there were positive reasons for remaining single, such as more opportunity for personal development and increased personal freedom (Lowenstein et al., 1981; Stein 1976).

In the beginning of the 1980s several researchers studying single women found that most reported remaining single because they viewed the role of wife as subordinate (Nadelson & Notman, 1981; Peterson, 1982). A decade later, two psychologists studied financially successful single women who did not conceive of their singleness as a rejection of marriage, but rather as something that "did not happen." The subjects in this study did not express anxiety about their single status but rather felt that a romantic relationship was not central to their happiness. As one respondent said, "having a man would be the icing on the cake, but not the whole cake" (Anderson, Stewart, & Dimidjian, 1994). While this study cannot be generalized to the larger population of single women, it does indicate a significant change in women's lifestyle options.

With the traditional family and its associated distinct roles for men and women being less relevant, new opportunities for financial independence without a man, and decreased stigma of nonmarital sex, the cultural landscape in which women experience their EFs is considerably different than that which dominated history prior to 1960. Changed behaviors associated with the change in context have been documented. However, there is little research addressing how this changed cultural context has affected women's views of and experiences with EFs for the population under study.

It appears the dynamics that have long affected women's erotic friendships are either not relevant, or less relevant. The factors shaping women's EFs today are more complicated, their relationship choices are more varied and less scripted, and their realities less preconstructed. These changes call for new ways of conceptualizing and explaining women's views of and experiences with erotic friendships.

Theoretical Context: Post-1960s

As women's behavior and the cultural context changed, so did the need for new research and theories that identify and explain women's views of, and experiences with, EFs. In a complex world offering the individual more behavioral and relationship choices than ever before, theories that suggest individuals simply embrace and reproduce particular socially valued roles fall short in providing insight into this area of women's lives.

Despite their shortcomings, such theories continue to influence sociological research and analysis. The structural-functionalist (SF) model of marriage and family, in particular, continues to have a firm hold on academic work focused on erotic friendships. This model assumes departures from the traditional family model, such as remaining unmarried, are somehow less than, or in euphemistic language, an alternative or "other" lifestyles. McIntyre, writing in 1966 observed that even though few researchers label themselves as supporters of SF, the majority of research on the family involves its principles. Almost 40 years later, writing in the 2003 *Encyclopedia of Marriage and Family*, Scanzoni and Kingsbury (2003) make a similar observation, "SF stands unchallenged in terms of sway it holds over the realm of research and theory about families" (p. 1580).

Rice (1994) suggests that the influence of SF in research on relationships has created a deficit-comparison model: any variations on the traditional family are viewed as “less than” in comparison, the assumption being that everyone is supposed to marry, have children, and stay married. It is assumed this is what people desire and that the traditional family model is good for society as it promotes stability and social order. Parsons (1955) believed the nuclear family contributed to societal order by making clear societal expectations of the individual. He believed that if people were not pressured into conformity, they would behave in a self-interested, and possibly self-destructive, way that would be damaging to the smooth functioning of society. In accordance with this view, research either explicitly or implicitly based on SF principles position nonconforming behaviors as having some (usually undesired) effect on the family. For example, research on cohabitation addresses its effect on marriage rates, research on female employment addresses its effect on desire for and age at first marriage—the assumption being that people’s behaviors are either supportive or destructive to the family.

In research, and perhaps daily life, the primacy of the traditional family remains despite widespread behavioral variation. Ganong, Coleman, and Mapes (1990) conclude that despite behavioral change, “the nuclear family is the standard by which other family forms are evaluated; [and] individuals . . . from nuclear families are evaluated more positively than individuals . . . from other family forms” (p. 293). According to Alexander (1988), the family is assigned “an aura of objectivity that preempts individual creativity and the rebellion against norms” (p. 93).

In contrast, writing in 1970, Otto expressed, “After five hundred thousand years of human history, man is now at a point where he can create marriage and family

possibilities uniquely suited to his time, place, and situation.” (p. 9). This point is certainly more true 30 years later: marriage is easily terminated and divorce is somewhat normative; women can experience sexual freedom, economic independence, and even childbearing outside of marriage; and many men and women now experience or desire more role overlap than complementarity.

Despite these empirical realities, researchers are challenged in their efforts to move beyond a dichotomy—something is either good or bad for “the family.” New conceptualizations are needed, but they are difficult to embrace because the reification of the family, and the family ideology has become, “so deeply integrated into our consciousness that most people cannot support the idea that the family does not exist for any length of time” (Bernardes, 1993, p. 40). Scanzoni (Scanzoni & Kingsbury, 2003) writes, “today’s citizens find themselves in a transitional period in which prevailing cultural norms reinforce yesterday’s family pattern, whereas their own behavioral struggles indicate movement toward something different.”

In an effort to address the empirical realities of how people are experiencing their relationships and family life, “process theories” developed to capture the idea of ongoing change and adaptation, and people’s interactions with social structures. These theories subsumed the central tenets of a variety of perspectives including symbolic interaction, exchange, and conflict theory. Giddens (1984) elaborated on these theories and labeled his theory of the interplay between action and structure as “structuration” theory. Alexander (1988) built on the ideas of process theories and structuration theory and the distinction between the idea of reproduction and production. Alexander then labeled theories supporting the idea of reproduction (i.e., people learn values, norms and roles and then reproduce what they learn) as “old” action theories.

In contrast, Alexander labeled the work of Giddens (1982, 1984) and others that focus on “production” as “new” action theories (NAT). New action theories, according to Alexander (1988), address the innovations and struggles people experience as they try to develop and maintain relationships which meet their needs. According to Giddens (1982) people produce or create the conditions of their lives within the context of their social environment. Sometimes their environment constrains their efforts at innovation, sometimes it enables, and very often it does both. In this way, new action theories focus both on social structure and on the dynamics of persons’ choices or lack of choices in light of social structures. Alexander suggests new action theories are really a synthesis of insights from numerous traditions including symbolic interaction, exchange, Marxism and other conflict theories, ethnomethodology, and phenomenology. Scanzoni and Marsiglio (1993) suggest other feminist theories are also subsumed, such as recent versions of critical and feminist theories (Gravenhorst, 1988). Though labeled “new action” theories by Alexander (1988), it should be noted that many of the concepts embraced by new action theorists are reminiscent of the work of early 20th century sociologists of the Chicago school, particularly Georg Simmel, which fell out of favor as functionalism’s influence increased (Levine, Carter, & Miller, 1976).

The work of Anthony Giddens (1984) is particularly useful for explaining and illuminating participants’ views of and experiences with erotic friendships. Anthony Giddens’ “structuration theory” addresses the interplay and reciprocal nature of action and structure. His theory subsumes many of the still-relevant aspects of scripting and functionalist theory, while not assuming that scripts, roles, or social structures determine behavior. Structuration theory focuses on the interplay of action and structure: People act with knowledge of social structures but do not simply reproduce them; rather, people

exhibit agency to innovate and adapt; and through people's action, social structures are themselves changed.

Under a new action model instead of asking how X (some deviation from the traditional family model) affects Y, the relevant questions involve how people manage economic, social, and political forces in their effort to develop meaningful relationships and meet their needs for emotional connection. It involves analysis that incorporates the experiences, attempts at conformity, and resistance that constitute people's actual efforts to develop meaningful relationships. Phrased another way, "If we view persons as struggling to create better lives for themselves and their families, then the issue is how to conceptualize the struggle. In this way NAT rejects the reification of social structures and embraces notions of rebellion/construction/ and creativity." (Scanlon & Marsiglio, 1993, p. 109).

Appropriately, then, a new action approach calls for examining the participants' views and actions as they both reflect, struggle with, and change social roles, scripts, and structures. Most importantly, a new action approach helps us to focus on how through their actions, participants attempt to meet their relationship needs so as to make better, more meaningful lives for themselves.

A new action approach to family and relationships also highlights the need for new language to describe relationships. "Erotic friendship" (Gravenhorst, 1988) conveys the essence of the relationship sought by participants, without limiting the legal status of the relationship. This became important to a smooth discussion of the findings as participants went back and forth in describing what they wanted in a "relationship" and what they wanted in "marriage" or in a "spouse." It is made clear, however, when participants spoke about a benefit or drawback they perceive as specific to a marital or nonmarital relationship.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the project's findings and analysis in the context of the sociological research and theories presented in the previous chapter. The findings are presented in three sub-parts: (a) Sex and Dating; (b) Erotic Friendships and Marriage; and (c) Work, Money, and Mothering. These three areas do not strictly correspond with the organizational structure of the interview instrument, but rather represent a logical grouping of the participants' responses.

Three themes present themselves throughout each of the three categories of findings. Whether discussing sex and dating; erotic friendships and marriage; or work, money, and mothering, the participants report that (a) they struggle to reconcile their nonconventional lifestyles with lingering traditional values; (b) their struggle takes place in a constantly changing and evolving context; and (c) the constant state of struggle and need for adaptation leaves them questioning the likelihood of finding and maintaining satisfying erotic friendships.

Participants are leading nonconventional lives, but feel the "pull" of conventional impulses. They speak of the difficulties of not having clear relationship and dating scripts to follow, social pressures to not be "too sexual," pressure to marry, of the benefits of interdependence in relationships, and of preferring traditional dating and parenting behaviors. If looked at in isolation, some of the quotes suggest these highly accomplished women would prefer to be living traditional lives focused on home and children. But

interestingly, their traditional lifestyle preferences live alongside their high-powered and time-intensive careers and the benefits they associate with living as single, economically-secure women.

As suggested by Kamen (2000) and Morgan (2003) economic and educational opportunities are now viewed as a "right" and the struggles which afforded women such opportunities seem to have faded from the collective memory of the generation of women included in this study. Sex outside of marriage is also largely taken for granted and was spoken about as an expected part of relationships—in fact the topic of nonmarital sex usually came up in discussing other issues, but was not viewed as something worthy of discussion on its own merits. Questions asking about sexual behavior were answered quickly, with a feeling of "let's get back to the more important questions about relationships." For the majority of participants, work opportunities and changed sexual norms seem to fall under the category of "things are different now then they were for my mother"; but with few exceptions, that was the extent that participants dwelled upon the past.

Two respondents, however, made it clear they were consciously grateful for what they perceived as the tremendous differences between their lives and their mother's lives. The following quotes resonate with the sentiments of Susan B. Anthony (Burns & Barns, 2003)

I feel very . . . unoppressed. I don't have to get up and make my husband coffee because he can't take care of himself, I don't have to do his laundry, I don't have to have dinner ready. I can eat what ever I want, whenever I want. I can get up when I want. I can't imagine . . . and I don't think my grandfather could make his own coffee. . . . My life is just so different from my mother's and my grandmother's, it is incredible. I feel like everything is my choice. And for them, when I think about their lives, it's like they had no choice, or practically no choice. It's hard to think about, I could cry thinking how restricted their life view is, how restrictive it still is. (A1)

I am aware every day of how lucky I am, and how different my life is from my mother's generation. I don't think my life is perfect, but at least I am in control of my choices. And my vision for myself is whatever I make it, anything is possible—now some things are not probable, but in terms of lifestyles, educational opportunities, travel, work, sex, children even, I'm certainly not limited because I'm a woman or because I need a man to do things for me. And that just was not the case for my mom. The difference between us is constantly amazing to me. (A2)

While participants were less interested in discussing the struggles that led to their current opportunities, they were very much interested in discussing how individual women, how they themselves as women, will manage all of the options and opportunities now available to them. Whereas previous generations may have been concerned with gaining choice for women, participants express excitement as well as concern about how to handle so many choices. Participants wanted to discuss the process of learning and integrating new information into future choices and actions. They wanted to discuss their struggle to adapt and to innovate, and to live as “pioneers” without much relevant guidance and few role models. Appropriately then, new action theories focusing on how people “produce” behavior and actively work to develop and maintain meaningful relationships help to illuminate and explain participants' behavior and way of life.

The work of Anthony Giddens (1979) is particularly helpful in explaining participants' views and actions. Giddens' structuration theory addresses what he refers to as a “duality of structure.” Simply put, people make social structures but also are constrained by them. Giddens views action and structure as two sides of the same coin, unable to be analyzed separately. Structures provide a set of shared meanings that allows action to occur. While structures are somewhat stable, they change in response to action and to the intended and unintended consequences of actions. As active agents, people are reflexive. We monitor our actions, take in others' responses to them, and adapt so as to achieve our desired outcomes. Given this, Giddens suggests the proper unit of analysis

for sociologists are not discrete actions, but rather social practices or “ongoing streams of action.” This idea of ongoing streams of action provides an important insight into the interpretation of the data in this study.

The findings are presented somewhat discretely by topic. Effort is made to highlight the range of responses and the connection between responses within subject areas. Within each topic, their struggles and ambivalence, at times, seem paramount. However, when viewed in their entirety, when looking at their “ongoing stream of action” participants are exhibiting and expressing a new way for women to live, a new model of what women want and expect from EFs. This new way to live involves many more choices than were available to women in previous generations. With these choices comes a near constant weighing of the costs and benefits of each, and ongoing adaptation to new information and possibilities.

The participants are making choices related to work and relationships that are creating and reflecting on their self-identity and how they want to live. According to Giddens (1990) people are increasingly free to choose not only what they want to do, but also who they want to be. As demonstrated by participants (and suggested by Giddens) this is both liberating and troubling. People have to accept much more responsibility for how they live, and whether they live in ways which are true to their “real” selves—separate from, but also influenced by both conventional and nonconventional social structures. Giddens (1990) suggests that as family and erotic friendships (though he does not use that term) become more flexible and adaptive, we have to allow for much more time and effort to interpret, adapt, maintain, and build or change these relationships. In this way as well, participants are pioneers and many of their responses reflect the challenge of figuring out first, that all this work is necessary, and second, how best to

manage all the options and opportunities presented by this more flexible view of family and erotic friendships.

Understandably then, this constant weighing, reflection, and adaptation can sometimes sound like ambivalence toward the options and a longing for a simpler time and clearer rules and guidelines. However, what at first appears to be struggle and ambivalence, can also be seen as living a life of active reflection, innovation, and adaptation.

The participants recognize they are living in changing times with new opportunities; new political, economic, and social forces; and the pull of both conventional structures as well as nonconventional structures (such as changing views of female economic independence, increased workplace opportunities, changing laws governing family life, and current media images of single life). In analyzing the data, it becomes clear that the forces shaping participants' views of and experiences with erotic friendships, as well as the environment in which they pursue EFs, are undergoing constant evolution and change. Changes occur as the women age, as they reconceptualize what is most important to them in an EF, as they assess what is possible and probable, and as their environment and the people around them change. In the words of one participant "it is a constant reevaluation and opening up to, what is possible, and what is becoming possible."

Its great that we have choices of what we want to do. We can work from home, we can run our own businesses. We never have to go into office building if we don't want to. Because we have our own brains and we have our own money. Regardless, I think life isn't easy and you have to make choices, choices with real consequences. It's a balancing act. It's definitely that life is a balancing act with choosing work versus family or relationships or combining both. Which is more than our moms could do, but at least they had direction, they knew what they were supposed to do. No one I know knows what to do, and whatever they choose, they just have, I guess

the word is angst, anxiety. Some kind of feeling like not knowing which way is up, always second-guessing their choices. [A3]

I think its because the roles are changing; before it was so defined—what the woman does, what the man does, and she may have a part time job—but it's really nothing and she can drop that in a minute because he can provide for the family and she can have dinner ready. But now it is different, women are getting married later, careers are coming first, everything is getting shifted. No one knows what to do. I think that is also contributing to more divorces. What are the expectations now, no one knows? People go into it with preconceived notions, but it's not really known who is going to do what . . . that causes a lot of problems for people, renegotiating and fitting everything in. [A4]

Oh yeah, its an improvement but its harder, but its harder because the roles aren't defined anymore, there are so many options, no one knows what they are doing. But now it's so much harder, you don't know what you are supposed to do. You are making it up as you go along...we are making it up as we go along, as a group. Better, but harder, we won't realize the benefits 'til later. I assume we'll see the benefits, right now it's just confusing. [A5]

Just in terms of, when my mom went to college you had to make choices, to be a nurse, a teacher, a dental hygienist. She was a dental hygienist. You probably usually had only two choices. Now, you have so many choices your head's spinning. It's a whole new set of problems. I like it more but it makes some thing's harder and some things easier. Before you really didn't have to think about it. You had kids; you stayed home with them. Now you have to make a choice and if you spend too much time at home then your career is at risk. If you spend too much time at work, your children or family is at risk. Where I don't think women were so torn before. It's harder to find the balance point. But you can also do great things in terms career. I sometimes tease my mom 'cause she's always said you can do anything, go to school, get all these graduate degrees, do all this. Now I'm like, I'm done with all that shit and I'm 31 and now I can't find anyone to get married and my eggs are disintegrating. Wouldn't it have just been easier the old way when everyone got married right after college or didn't even go to college?

L: Do you think it was easier or better before?

R: I think overall I guess it depends what happens in the next few years actually. That's to be determined. Generally I do like the path that I've taken but, it's not, it certainly has crossed my mind that the other way would have been more simple. But I definitely enjoy the intellectual stimulation, the challenges I've had through grad school and work and all of that. You also miss out on a lot when you get married and have kids right out of school. I've gotten to travel. I've gotten to do a lot of things that if I had had a kid when I was 20 I wouldn't have been able to do. [A6]

I was always told I can do whatever I want to do. Be whatever I want to be, and I don't fault my mother or father, but I was never taught how to balance it, to make room in my life for all of it. . . . My old law firm used to call itself the family friendly firm, 3 months paid maternity leave, come back on lesser hours and be on the mommy track, but you could never make partner. If that happened you would never ever make partner. The ultimate sacrifice would have to be made. So I removed myself from that career, and I have that flexibility now, control my own destiny. That is also part of the change, the work world changed too, its not just relationships, or maybe it's because of changed relationships, but even your work life is less set out than it used to be. Which is great, a lot more risks, you have to take total responsibility for your life, but its probably better than being in dead end relationships and dead end careers. [A7]

There is an expectation that you will do well and you will succeed, but then a certain part of us all want to taken care of and have a family. But can you even say that you like some aspects of what your mother had and not be considered a hypocrite and still be taken seriously? It's a strange time, I'm not sure how I feel about it. Like a lot of women I want family and work and respect and nurturance and time for travel and babies—but who has that and why aren't they teaching us how to have it? But honestly that is what I think we are moving towards, no one can turn back the clock, so we'll just have to get better at integrating all these things, there are still many changes to come in what we can expect for our lives. [A8]

As suggested by quote A8, even if it would be easier, or perhaps provide more of a guarantee that “they would end up where they want” [A3], reminiscing about an easier time may be pointless. As described in the previous chapter, the world has changed too dramatically to assume that old scripts or norms will hold the same relevance. Women's increased pursuit of higher education, improvements in workplace opportunities, women's later entry into marriage, and divorce laws that encourage female financial independence all make it unlikely the genie can be put back in the bottle. Such societal changes combined with more flexible views of family life and erotic friendships, may by necessity require that people find themselves without clear guidance, role models or scripts.

We haven't found the right ones yet, we are still trying all these different paths, but haven't found the one that will work for a lot of women. My friends and I talk about this a lot, but we think it's coming, soon we'll know what to do, we are just

living in a transitional time. But my mom says she felt the same way, like she was in a transitional time. Maybe every generation just has it's own transitions. [A9]

The participant quoted above sees herself as living in a time of transition. But it may be that we have reached a point that is not merely a transition, but rather is a “new” way of experiencing EFs—a world where scripts are less relevant than the ability and willingness to engage in ongoing adaptation and negotiation within erotic friendships. As suggested in the previous chapter, though the idea of adaptation is now included in “new” action theories it is reminiscent of the views of several early twentieth century sociologists, particularly Georg Simmel, which were prominent until the rise of functionalism (Levine, Carter, & Miller, 1976).

Scanzoni (in press) makes an analogy between today's relationships and improvisational theater—the unpredictable theater genre where actors perform absent a script. Without a script, it is more difficult to anticipate the responses of those with whom the actors share the stage and the effect the actors have on the audience. As is its reputation among actors, improvisational theater is “riskier” than the traditional scripted play. This risk is somewhat reduced by certain shared meanings, certain structures in Giddens' terms, which allow the action to continue. But what is exciting about improvisational theater to the audience is that they do not know what is coming next, and neither do the actors. In improvisational theater there is the ever-present possibility for lines to fail, connections to be missed, and stories to be lost, all while the audience is watching in real time. Yet improvisational theater provides actors great flexibility – the actor is both playwright and player. When actors connect in the improvisational moment the rewards can be exhilarating, fresh, and immensely satisfying.

Like actors in improvisational theater, the participants in this study struggle without a script to give their best performance while constantly taking in new information and incorporating it into their future actions. They do this without knowing if they are going to end up with a great show, and in front of the watchful eyes of their friends and family. They are living Giddens' structuration theory and principle of reflexivity in every moment. Herein lies the excitement, the challenges, the dangers, and the rewards of the participants' lives as high-achieving single women who hope to develop satisfying and meaningful EFs while maintaining certain treasured aspects of their current lifestyle.

Dating and Sexual Behaviors

As discussed in Chapter 3, Theoretical and Historical Context, women's dating and sexual behaviors have changed dramatically since the 1960s. Consistent with the findings of the National Health and Social Life Survey and the other studies reviewed in the Current Context section, the participants have engaged and do engage in nonmarital sex. Indeed, nonmarital sex, at least with this sample, is a nonissue. They are not waiting for marriage to have sex and they express no concerns about unplanned pregnancies or sexually transmitted diseases. There is clearly little connection in participants' minds between marriage and the availability or propriety of sex. Participants are quick to highlight how their comfort level with sexual behavior has increased over time, and their view that society is also more accepting of women's sexuality.

I think it's great that *Sex and the City* and *Ally* and lots of other images of single women show us enjoying our sexuality and being open and funny about it. We should be, we are doing it, it helps to talk about it. And any guy who can't handle that women our age have some experience, well, I don't know who they are going to date, I guess high school girls. Although according to MTV, they are pretty experienced too. [B1]

I'm more relaxed about it. More accepting of it. Much less judgmental of myself and of others. I guess the easiest way to sum it up is I'm just less afraid of it all. I

feel educated about it, and I feel smart about it and I know myself well enough to know what is right and what is wrong for me. At the end of the day, that is really the only person I need to be concerned with. And, to be a responsible adult, and manage myself accordingly and also, and sometimes I'm better at this than other times, not to beat myself up because sometimes I do make a stupid choice. I'm a huge believer, that with everything in life, everything happens for a reason, and use your head, but if you make a mistake, learn from it at least make something out of it, as opposed to just dwelling on, now trust me, there are moments of, "Oh my G-d, why did I do that," but I'm just less afraid. [B2]

At some point I realized its ok to have sex if I want to have sex. There was a time when you wanted to have sex but didn't think you should, fear of being seen as promiscuous, like in college and high school. So there was conflict of I want to but . . . but then I came to the realization that its ok to want sex. I guess experience, age, maturity just made me realize it was ok. [B3]

Women are more liberated, with their bodies, their ideas about sex, its ok to be sexy to enjoy one's sexuality. No reason why it should be one sided. I think it was before *Sex and the City*, its such a popular show. Four women talking about their sexual escapades, and its ok. Its fine, its popular because every woman can relate to it. That's me. Its been a big shift. [B4]

I think those same concerns [fear of gaining a "bad" reputation because of an active sex life] are real for high school and college women, maybe in graduate school, and I suppose its real to the degree people buy into it. I think some of that is gone, some of those boundaries are gone. The degree to which you believe in the boundary is the degree to which it is there. And I can't control the degree to which it is there for someone who I might be interested in. It goes back to recognizing that I have agency, that I can state things, state needs. It opens the door for an openness that you might not otherwise have. [B5]

But, I think now that I'm older and I'm much more comfortable with my own sexuality where before in high school, you know you are very insecure and you're not supposed to be doing that. But now I'm more independent and mature, I'm more comfortable with my body and I'm much more open as far as communicating about my needs or sexual needs or sexual desires with my friends or with boyfriends or even just sexual partners. [B6]

Despite the behavioral and attitudinal changes indicated by these quotes, the participants acknowledge the continued effect of certain traditional sexual values. Two traditional values remain particularly prominent in the dating and sexual choices of participants. First, almost all participants express discomfort with asking a man out for a date, and prefer that men be the initiators. One respondent felt that if women take on this

role, it leaves men with no defined role, no defining characteristics at all: if women are earning, raising kids, and initiating sexual activity and relationships, then where do men distinguish themselves? More typically, participants express the issue in terms of their own discomfort with asking men out, and their preference for traditional roles in initiating contact and asking for the first date.

This is weird to talk about, because I recognize the inconsistency with my otherwise egalitarian views. But the truth is, I cannot and will not ask a man out. The thought makes me giggle like a school girl. And I go to singles events where someone has to make a move or the night is a loss. Never have I and never will I. Even on the date, he has to lead. He just has to or we'll end up friends. I have tried to psyche myself up to make the first move but it just . . . I can't. I don't know if it's my dad's voice in my ear that men don't like aggressive women, but I just can't. Now that being said, I like sex and am an equal partner once it has become a part of the relationship. I'm actually quite un-shy. But not until we've reached a certain level of comfort. [B7]

I liked a guy very much and just was not able to ask him out. I don't know why. Its just not in my . . . I wouldn't know how to do it and would be mortified if he said no. I think I know how scared men must be, it really takes a lot of nerve, but that is one area where I'm ok with how things were done in my parents' day. [B8]

No, I never have asked a man out. It is totally the limit to my wonder single-womanhood. But most of my friends agree, it's just not in us. I've got an acquaintance who does, all the time, and she says you have to, that they are too intimidated by attractive, obviously successful women. She has had a lot of success too, at least in having dates. But for some reason, to me it just gets the relationship off on the wrong foot. Not that you want to get things off on a super-traditional foot, but I don't know, in dating, it's just still what feels right. [B9]

These quotes illustrate a desire for some aspects of the traditional gender roles and the traditional dating script, at least at the point of initiation, even among women who are otherwise more flexible in their views of appropriate gender roles. The traditional sexual script calls for men to initiate and lead potentially sexual or romantic encounters, and for women to respond to male actions and keep things from going "too far" (i.e., women are the gatekeepers, but not the initiator of the relationship or subsequent sexual activity).

Comfort with aspects of the traditional script has also been found in studies of younger female populations. Lottes study of college-aged women found that 78% said men and women should be equal initiators of sexual relationships, though only 38% reported ever initiating a relationship (Lottes, 1993). Similarly, another study of college-aged women suggested women are still more likely to initiate sexual activity in exclusive or long-term relationships (O'Sullivan & Byers, 1992).

Journalist Paula Kamen (2000) suggests traditional roles and scripts, at least at the beginning of a relationship, make it easier and more likely that a woman will be asked out. As evidence she highlights the popularity of *The Rules*, the 1996 best seller that encouraged women to return to a traditional orientation and script if they hope to get married. The book's stated message is that if you want to get married, then let the man ask you out, let him initiate sexual activity, and let him pay for dates. The authors suggest women should make men feel more like men, by acting more like women, i.e, by following a traditional script. Kamen suggests *The Rules'* popularity is due to the authors' methods still being the most effective way for women to attract men: by acting in traditionally female and feminine ways.

Whether because of assumed effectiveness or lack of an acceptable alternative model, participants offer support for Lottes' finding and Kamen's observation that certain aspects of the traditional script remain influential on women. This is so despite otherwise changed views and behaviors about non-marital sex, and despite the fact that at least for the participants, this behavior has not resulted in marriage, and could perhaps be viewed as "not effective."

The second area where participants report being influenced by traditional values is in their belief in the need to protect their "reputation." Despite recent research suggesting

an erosion in male support for a sexual double standard (Astin et al., 1997; Kamen 2000; Sprecher, 1989), participants suspect there may be an “upper limit” as to the sexual freedom allowed for women. All participants acknowledged that they either knew or suspected that men continue to prefer as erotic friends, and particularly as marital partners, women who do not have “too much” sexual experience, or a reputation for being “easy.”

I think it still holds true that there is the kind of woman that you fool around with and there's the kind of woman that you take home to meet your parents. Not in all cases. I think that men still hold on to that. I can't imagine someone really wanting someone that everyone else has already had. It's like anything, I don't want the same, men don't want the same car that all of their friends have too. I think it's something special. Men don't turn down random sexual encounters with easy women, but maybe they wouldn't be involved with someone that they know has slept with everybody or slept with everyone easily too. [B10]

For some men, it is still relevant. Listening to male friends, they like a woman who is active and experienced and who enjoys sex, but they might not picture themselves marrying that woman. They might picture themselves marrying a less experienced woman. [B11]

I know plenty of women who don't disclose everything to their partners for exactly that reason, because you still hear that with men our age, “the wild one is fun, but not the one you want to marry” and I have friends, they won't disclose how many partners, different sexual encounters they've had. For me, I don't want to go into details, but I don't regret anything, so why would I hold back? It's also about the honesty. But yeah, I think that pressure is there. [B12]

I think there is a sexual empowerment about women now that they control their sexuality and its ok to have sex for pleasure but I don't think the stigma of a sexually active woman has gone away, like they gave it with one hand, and took away with another. You still hear “slut,” hear women say it about other women, “she's pretty slutty,” “she's a whore.” How often do you hear that about a man? I think its probably gotten better since the sexual revolution, but I think it's still a downfall for women. [B13]

I do think there is also an element of protecting your reputation, fear that everyone will know your business, and there is still a double standard. I don't want to sleep with the guy that's been with everyone because I don't want to be a number for him. But its not the same for women, as much as Samantha [character from Sex and the City] tries to make it seem like it is. [B14]

I do feel the “don’t be too sexual,” “don’t be a ho,” no one wants to marry a “ho.” I don’t know where I feel it from, many or most of my friends, aren’t judging me, but since they don’t act the way I do, maybe I feel like I’m out of the norm, feeling like the woman you can get to go to bed with you on first date is not someone you should take seriously. [B15]

Participants are still aware of a sexual double-standard, even if it does not stop them from engaging in nonmarital sex. The sexual double standard allowing men more sexual freedom than women was assumed to be largely due to women needing to behave in ways which would be pleasing to men, so as to insure they would find a marital partner and financial support. As set forth above in the Historical Context section of the previous chapter, social scientists and historians have documented evidence of the double standard in ancient Hebrew, Greek and Roman cultures, and have charted its continued influence through the 1950s (Reiss, 1960; Rubin 1990).

Lillian Rubin (1990) suggests that through the 1950s, young women were taught that their “good name” was the key to marriage and a place in the community. A woman’s reputation as someone who did or did not have sex was the most important determinant of whom she would date in high school and who would marry her and how successful she would be in playing the “dating game.” To succeed in this dating game, women had to hold a man’s interest until a time when he was ready to do the “honorable thing” and marry her. Women had to “titillate but not fornicate,” to keep male interest alive but not ruin their chance of finding a good spouse by giving away too much. (Scanzoni, 2000, p. 39).

Evidence of the continued influence of such traditional values on women’s behavior has been found in recent studies of younger populations of women. High school and college-aged women report fears of what too much sexual activity can do to their reputation and dating opportunities (Tannenbaum, 1999; Tolman & Higgins, 1994). Still,

these populations are distinguished from the study participants by not having yet proven their ability to financially support themselves, and to make a life for themselves as a single person. The fact that fears of a “bad reputation,” or of being considered “easy” are still influential to financially independent women in their late 20s and 30s suggests these views are based on something other than financial needs and fears. Perhaps the continued desire to please men, the fear of straying too far from traditional structures or norms, or the belief, on some level, that such traditional values are desirable and preferable. But what is perhaps more interesting is the self-reflexive process participants follow in reconciling these more traditional views, with their understanding of their own preferences and their less traditionally-minded sexual behavior.

While some traditional values, roles, and scripts remain influential, they fall significantly short of providing an acceptable framework for the participants to model or in which they might ground their behavioral choices. In their effort to behave in ways consistent with who they want to be and how they want to lead their lives, participants speak of both the influence of traditional values and their behavioral departures from them; they speak of both feeling constrained by external social pressures and emboldened by external sources of validation for their behavioral choices. The participants all report struggling to reconcile the conflicting hodge-podge of roles, values, and opportunities that are available to them.

According to scripting theory, societies norms are passed on to people through cultural mediators, such as parents, the media, and religion (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Gagnon & Simon, 1973). Similarly, Robert Merton’s (1957) work on reference groups suggests that people want to please people in their lives whose views they respect and whose approval they desire. Both of these concepts are relevant, but not determinative,

for participants. Rather, they are part of the self-reflexive process wherein people act with knowledge of external structures, but not determined by them, and through their actions, change those structures. Participants both want to please and to find relevant guidance from sources they care about or trust (such as parents, religion, friends, and at times, popular media) but find these sources lacking. And what is more important to participants is to behave in a way which fits with their view of themselves—even if aware of the potential costs, such as being perceived of as “too sexual,” or alienating one of the sources of more conventional messages.

Many participants express that at their current age and given their life experience and amount of independence they have experienced, the advice or approval of their religion or family or friends is less important than it was when they were younger. They feel those sources or reference groups do not understand or relate to their current life circumstances. Even the current media images that supposedly represent and support successful, adult single women and their newfound sexual freedoms, reportedly miss many aspects of participants’ struggles, and even where accurately portraying their challenges, fail to provide much clear guidance. Their similarly situated peers provide little help as they are facing the same struggles and are also seeking guidance and approval from somewhere, but often come up empty-handed. This leaves participants feeling they are “on their own”—not because they lack for external sources of information but rather because they are left alone to determine which combination best “fits.” So while they are hoping for clear guidance from the larger culture and from sources like parents, peers, religion, and media, they have not found a source that fits but rather have to incorporate and tailor the ongoing influx of both conventional and nonconventional messages.

Things have totally changed from my parents' time at my age, to mine. I love them and respect them tremendously, but their approval or not approval, that is less of an issue for me now. They know I am almost 30 years old, and if I make a decision, it's the right decision for me. Now, if there were to be consequences, if I were to get pregnant they'd be horrified. Let's just say, its my decision making process, my parents approval or disapproval isn't a factor in the mix. It's more about how I'm going to be. Will I be disappointed with myself for what I have or haven't done. It's more my take on things as opposed my parents take on things. In the last maybe 3 years I've noticed a real change in that divide. When you are growing up it seems your parents know all, they've experienced all, and they've seen it all. And you trust their judgment implicitly on many things. But I also know it's a very different world than it was when they were growing up, when they were my age. My mom had two kids, dad was in medical school. So they don't know what my experiences, and my life, is like. They can't relate to it, can't relate to going on date after date after date. They met and got married, they may have had other people beforehand, my dad has even said to me it was just non-dramatic, it was just what you did. I mean both are happy, but they don't know what its like to be 29 and not attached to anyone, and you have your career, and . . . they just can't relate. So if the original question is does that factor into my decision-making process, no. Sure you always want your parents approval, but if I want to do something I'm going to do it, and not because of what my parents think. [B16]

I think it's great that a show like *Sex and the City* can be on TV and watched by men and women and be very honest and open and these are women who have a lot of sex and enjoy and talk about it. Yeah, you go girl. I think that's great that that can be part of our society. Now is it necessarily better for us as role models? Now are we supposed to strive to be 35 and single and sleep around. Maybe that's not such a great role model. I don't know, I look around and don't see any good ones. [B17]

That's what I mean, how do you distinguish between what [conservative] Christianity clearly says about sex outside of marriage, and the fact that so many people, so many people who go to church, are single adults. And the issue of the message from the pulpit, and the issue of people being single in their thirties. And people who are divorced, I imagine they think they are exempt from teachings that say no sex outside of marriage. I mean I'd be interested to hear from these people. Are they living by the letter of the law, not engaging? It just doesn't seem . . . appropriate for some of us, yet the bottom line message is clear. You either make your own adjustments, or your lifestyle might lead you to give religion up totally, and that is not in my best interest, and I don't believe it is what the church wants me to do. [B18]

My religion is something that takes on greater or lesser prominence in my life depending on circumstance. It used to be more of a constant but now I find I'm taking what works for me, and not focusing on what doesn't. Religion, and what I thought was the way to lead a "good" life, used to be something that had a strong hold on how I processed things, what I thought was right. But honestly, as far as sex goes, if I don't want to be questioning how I lead my social life, I have to be

selective as to what I let shape my views. But yes, that was a change from when I was younger, religion, parents, what other people think of me, it's all less relevant in shaping my feelings now, I mean nothing really fits for a 32 year old single woman, who is kind of religiously minded, but can't be celibate her whole life. I'm more self-reliant now with my views, it's more about what experience has taught me. But I do imagine, that when I find someone, religion will again become more important. I hate the way that sounds, kind of like when I can do what it says, I'll return to being a good Jew. [B19]

As described in the Chapter 3, new action theory (Alexander, 1988) provides a helpful theoretical context in which to understand the views expressed in the above quotes. New action theory suggests that rather than following preestablished scripts or relying on cultural mediators such as religion and parents, today people are actively integrating their many needs and preferences with the desires and beliefs of the sources they care about—such as parents, friends, and religion. Participants' awareness of both increased freedom to experience their sexuality, along with an acknowledgment of some traditional constraints, is consistent with Giddens' (1982) assertion that some aspects of our environment enable, while others constrain. Participants are developing new roles and behavioral patterns as they learn, integrate, and adapt to the sometimes opposing aspects of their milieu. As in quote B13 and B5

I think there is a sexual empowerment about women now that they control their sexuality and its ok to have sex for pleasure but I don't think the stigma of a sexually active woman has gone away, like they gave it with one hand, and took away with another. [B13]

I think those same concerns [fear of gaining a "bad" reputation because of an active sex life] are real for high school and college women, maybe in graduate school, and I suppose its real to the degree people buy into it. I think some of that is gone, some of those boundaries are gone. The degree to which you believe in the boundary is the degree to which it is there. And I can't control the degree to which it is there for someone who I might be interested in. It goes back to recognizing that I have agency, that I can state things, state needs. It opens the door for an openness that you might not otherwise have. [B5]

These participants are acknowledging the existence of old and new structures, but also their agency to both act in ways contrary to structures, and to change those structures through their actions. They do not view themselves, particularly the woman quoted in B5, as a “victim” of structures, but do acknowledge the challenge of dealing with views which may be present in others, or receive more social support than their own.

Giddens argues that people draw from social structures in order to carry out social interaction, and in so doing, contribute to the reproduction of structures. As Giddens (1984) formulates this “structure has no existence independent of the knowledge that agents have about what they do in their day-to-day activities” (p. 26). This view is reflected in quote B5, “the degree to which you believe in the boundary is the degree to which it is there” (p. 26).

According to Giddens (1984), people know a great deal about the social world and what it values and encourages, and they incorporate this into their behavior and sense of agency. This mutual dependence of structure and agency is what Giddens calls the “recursive character” of social life. The recursive character of social life requires that people engage in ongoing self-reflection and critique, or what Giddens calls “self-reflexivity,” as well as a constant “reading” of their social environment.

Reflexivity can be described as a self-defining process that depends upon the monitoring of, and reflection upon, psychological and social information about possible trajectories of life and outcomes of actions. As Giddens (1990) develops this point, “the reflexivity of modern social life consists in the fact that social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information (from economic, political, “expert” and media sources) about these very practices, thus constitutively altering their character” (p. 38).

Giddens places much more emphasis on the process with all its richness, complexity, contradiction, and anxiety, which allows people to “read” cultural life and then, to act, than do the “old action” theorists who viewed people as following socially-approved scripts and accepting a socially-constructed reality. As predicted by Giddens, participants do not speak about discarding the scripts or values of their reference groups, rather their struggle is to integrate these things with their own often-changing values and preferences, into the milieu in which they live. To repeat, they have a variety of sources to draw on for guidance but are “on their own” in figuring out how to balance and integrate them in a way that enables them to be “true” to themselves and their desired way of life.

My singleness, my views of sex, and men, and marriage, everything we’ve been talking about, I just feel I’m on my own in figuring it out. I know what my religion thinks I should do, I know what my parents want me to do, but even they realize things are just different now, and different for me, doing the kind of work that I do, having a demanding schedule, living alone far from them. I want to please people, and I want them to stop worrying about me, but not so much that it is going to affect my major choices. Sometimes I think my mixed feelings about what I want for my life keep me from making choices, but then I think, I am making a choice, a choice to live in a way that fits with what I want and need now. And maybe it makes it harder for others to understand me, but how else could I do it? I couldn’t lead the kind of life my church directed me towards, or my parents, even if I wanted to. I feel, my friend uses this phrase a lot, we are works in progress (though progress towards what, I don’t know) whereas some other people we know like to feel they are fully sculpted—even though of course their lives can change too. . . . The real skill is to remain open and to have confidence in your ability to make good decisions, even if they are not supported by people you care about, or even the church. [B20]

Participants live and act in a world where nonmarital sex is a nonissue. Yet they have not discarded traditional beliefs that the purpose of their dating efforts is to find a husband, that a man should initiate relationships and sexual liaisons, and that their reputation as someone who is not overly sexually active is important to prospective husbands. This clash of traditional beliefs and nonconventional behaviors in a modern

and always-changing context creates confusion and at times, anxiety. At the same time, the process of reconciling traditional beliefs and nonconventional behaviors fosters creativity, careful thought, and a more tailored approach to their own actions, views of self, and plan for how they want to live, or in Giddens' language, on ongoing state of self-reflexivity and adaptation.

Erotic Friendships and Marriage

This section of the chapter presents data relating to participants' views of, and experiences with, erotic friendships. Without hesitation or exception, each of the participants expressed the desire to be in an erotic friendship and specifically, to marry. All participants said they are not interested or willing to "waste time" in erotic friendships that are not likely to lead to marriage.

The participants' desire to be in an EF is held despite the recognition of flaws, drawbacks, and challenges that they associate with EFs, and in particular, marriage. Their desire is rooted in the belief that with such relationships come two rewards. First, they become the top priority in someone else's life. With an EF a problem for one person, is a problem for the other. While participants report emotionally fulfilling relationships with friends and other family members, they believe an EF is necessary to achieve top-priority status, and for many participants, marriage cements this status. The second benefit reported to be exclusive to EFs is regular, ongoing assistance with the logistics of daily life. Participants' desire practical help and a division of labor and feel the best way to achieve this is through having an EF. The participants do not believe these rewards of emotional and practical priority status can be achieved through other relationships. Though, as is evidenced by their own statements, participants are finding ways to meet these ends, even if not in the way, or to the degree, they desire.

Being a Priority in Someone's Life

Participants want to be in an EF so as to be a priority in someone else's life for both practical and emotional matters—and it appears practical and emotional concerns are often linked together. Several participants measured the degree to which they are a priority, or in some cases, the seriousness of the relationship, by the legitimacy of their asking their partner to pick them up at the airport at an inconvenient hour.

While the linking of “priority status” to the airport may seem to make it a logistical matter, one that could be handled through payment or asking a friend for help, the airport seems to hold a larger significance to participants. Passing the “airport test” seems to represent to participants a joining of forces to a degree that what affects one, affects the other, that two lives are joined, and that in addition to sharing the good things in life (participants often expressed they had people to share the good with), this person shares, and is personally affected by, the other's challenges, both mundane and serious. It is part of participants' understanding of what it means to be a team, to be a part of a “we.” In this way, this type of priority status, and the emotional and practical support they believe goes along with this, is an indicator of the level of intimacy they share with their EF.

It should be noted that the linkage of priority status to being picked up at the airport may relate to issues particular to Atlanta—a sprawling city, an enormous airport, and a public transportation system which is underutilized by those with other options, even less convenient options. Recent security measures make the airport an even more inconvenient place. But despite the city-specific reasons why the airport may be significant to participants, it may also be that the airport signifies “somebody cares that I am leaving,” “somebody wants to say goodbye and hello to me,” “somebody is waiting

for me to come back.” To participants the airport is symbolic of a level of intimacy and priority status they hope to find in an erotic friendship.

The following quotes indicate the ways participants believe being a priority in someone’s life is manifested, and the significance this has for participants.

“It’s two in the morning and I want to talk,” or “my flight was canceled and now I’m getting in late” it’s not that you can’t have that with friends, I do, and have done that however, there is a way that you sit on the phone and consider “who would I be imposing on the least” “who is up?” whereas when you are in a relationship it’s the other person’s responsibility to deal with that, to pick up the phone or to roll over, or get you when you are stuck. That is a point of intimacy that I think you don’t get if you aren’t in a serious relationship. [C1]

There is an element of shared responsibility, of my problem is your problem, that just doesn’t come with anyone else. It’s like sharing the trouble, just like sharing the joy. For some reason, I don’t have any trouble sharing the joy, when something exciting happens, I really don’t feel the absence of an intimate partner, it’s when the trouble happens. [C2]

I had this situation where a guy who came to fix the garage door got a little weird. Calling leaving things . . . and I couldn’t really call my friends in the middle of the night, but I could call a boyfriend. It’s about who is going to be there. My friends will be there, but I’m more sensitive about what else they have in their lives and how much they can give. [C3]

I mean, I travel a lot for work, and especially in the winter, we have a lot of flight delays since most of my travel is to the northeast. Well my least favorite part of travel is worrying that I’m going to have to take the train home. Its scary late at night, and I just don’t like it. I want to know that someone is waiting for me to get home and that he is happy to get me at 2am, if it means we can be together sooner, or because he knows I hate taking the train. Now what is funny about this is, my friend and someone I travel with, says her husband is like “take a cab, I don’t care what it costs,” but in my book, any husband of mine would be there. With flowers. And you just can’t ask that of friends, I don’t know if that is a good thing, but I’m more conscientious than I would be if I were in a relationship. This sounds awful, but I’m more thoughtful of their time. It’s true. With a boyfriend or a partner it’s more like my problem is your problem, with a friend it’s more like “when is the last time I bothered them?” or “when is the last time they bothered me?” [C4]

There is a certain limit, even my girlfriends, who are the greatest in the world, and pretty much know everything about me, I’ll find myself, more due to me than anything, sometimes censoring myself, like if I had a really crabby day and feel like unburdening myself, I feel like a burden calling my friend and saying “I had a really bad day, and my boss is a jackass, and my meeting didn’t go well and Power

Point didn't work." So now, I deal with that myself, whereas I think if I was in a relationship, one I felt totally safe in, I would vent more, I would lean more. He would want me to share the problem, because it's his problem too if it affects me. I think when you get to that point, where your life really affects the other person's life, where you are a priority because it's basically one life, then you know you are in deep. [C5]

I had a wonderful childhood, wonderful parents, very active in my childhood, my brother and I knew that they were there for us. But we also knew that they came first for each other, that it was spouse, child, rest of world. So even though I get emotional support from other people, I'm not their priority. I would hope that with a romantic partner, I would be. I think the priority, that we are each other's priority. That even with my parents, I'm not their priority. But I would hope in a romantic relationship, I'm his priority. If I'm flying in and he has something else he'd rather be doing, or it's cold and wet, he gets me, because that is what you do when you are someone's priority. That is who you call when your car breaks down, or when you just need, or not even need, but want someone to put everything on hold because you need or want them to be there. That's what a real relationship is. When you have it, you just know. You don't hesitate to say "help me" or "get over here." [C6]

I would expect more from a partner than I would from Susan [friend]. Maybe it's just in terms of priorities, it's just in that type of relationship, in a friendship relationship, you are not your friends' top priority. You are very good friends, they treat you well, and you obviously rank high in the level of priorities, but you're not the top priority. A lot comes with being the top priority, kind of attention you get, what you do for other people. I guess in that relationship with a partner, not only are they your best friend, but it's you put that person ahead of everyone else. If there is a direct conflict. Not in that there is a problem, but if you had two things to do and you had to choose between them, that person is just going to necessarily triumph. Maybe it's just a different level of intimacy, or love, or an expectation...I mean, my friend Susan, right now she is working part-time, she's married, she has a twenty-month old, all of those things come before me. As they should. And I see her, sometimes I'll see her a couple times a week, sometimes I'll see her once every couple of weeks, if I need a ride to the airport. . . . I'm going to Hawaii in a couple of weeks, I didn't even ask her to take me to the airport, and she asked do I need someone to take me there, 'I'd be glad to do it', she said, but that is the kind of thing you can expect from a boyfriend, not a friend. She is wonderful, a wonderful friend, and I expect that from a partner. [C7]

I think that the relationship I have with my friends are really special. I think that probably those are probably different once you're married. They really act as your support system now. I'm just thinking something really important happened, if I was married, I would assume that the first person I would call would be my spouse. Whereas now, it might be my friends or my mom or my sister. It's almost just who's primary in your life. [C8]

When you are married, you face the world as a team, we against the world. A cohesive unit addressing the world. He and I against the world, rather than how I view my emotional relationships with friends and family. I would say it's a different level of security. As long as we stay married, no one is going to replace me as the other part of his we. [C9]

These quotes suggest participants are seeking a sense of "we-ness" from their EFs. As described by Cooley (1909), we-ness represents a sense of belonging, a sense of "I matter to the other, and the other matters to me." We-ness can be found in a variety of relationships, but as discussed by the participants, certain relationships trump others in terms of priority, as discussed in quote C7, "it's that you put that person ahead of everyone else. If there is a direct conflict . . . that person is just going to necessarily triumph." And in quote C9, "When you are married, you face the world as a team, we against the world. A cohesive unit addressing the world." There is a sense of acceptance that EFs come first. "I mean, my friend Susan, right now she is working part-time, she's married, she has a twenty-month old, all of those things come before me. As they should." And from C6 when speaking about her relationship with her parents, "But we also knew that they came first for each other, that it was spouse, child, rest of world. So even though I get emotional support from other people, I'm not their priority. I would hope that with a romantic partner, I would be."

There is also a sense that the reliance they have on their friends is temporary and changes when they become involved in an EF. As in quote C8, "I'm just thinking if something really important happened, if I was married, I would assume that the first person I would call would be my spouse. Whereas now, it might be my friends or my mom or my sister."

All but one of the participants were in agreement that there is something distinct about the priority status found in an EF (her view is discussed later). While the

participants receive a wide range of support from friends and other significant relationships, they recognize the limits of we-ness with people other than an EF. As suggested by Rubin (1985), we are aware of the limitations of friendship, and monitor what we ask and expect of them. Whereas Rubin suggested we have fewer boundaries with family members and erotic friends, some participants grouped family members with (nonerotic) friends, suggesting there were limits to what they could expect from everyone except an EF. For example, in quote C6 the participant acknowledges that her parents are each other's top priority, with their adult children coming next. Another respondent not quoted above suggested something similar about her sister, that while she could "count on her for anything," she was also aware of the limits of their relationship, especially when one of them was involved in an EF. Or in quote C7, where the participant's friend did drive her to the airport, but it was stated as something that she would not expect of a friend, but it was something she would expect of an erotic friend.

Participants were very clear about their awareness of the limits of friendship, and the way in which they monitor what they ask of friends. For example, from quote C3, "It's about who is going to be there. My friends will be there, but I'm more sensitive about what else they have in their lives and how much they can give." Or in quote C1,

"It's two in the morning and I want to talk," or "my flight was canceled and now I'm getting in late"—its not that you can't have that with friends, I do, and have done that; however, there is a way that you sit on the phone and consider "who would I be imposing on the least," "who is up"?

Only one participant offered a different view and actively resisted the notion or "paradigm," as she put it earlier in the interview that the status of EF is a determining factor in who is or is not a priority in her life.

No, the notion that one person or one relationship . . . its unrealistic, it does us in, it's a false sense of security. I get my needs met, I don't count on one person to do it all.

I don't assume that being intimate with someone means these things go along, or that they don't because the relationship isn't. I think this type of belief is linked to some traditional views, some things that have held women back. Being a priority in someone's life, that is a need, I may have different needs or values, I don't even know what it means. I'm much more concerned with someone who is interested in an exchange of growth, learning, decision making. These things like the tire, the airport, they aren't real concerns to me. Any problem I can write a check for, get someone's help with, that is not a problem. I'm more concerned with what their views are and how they would handle a real crisis, a sick child, other issues at that level. [C10]

This participant was unique in her view among participants, but the issue she highlights is a significant one. She may be articulating something the other participants are not yet consciously aware of. Giddens (1984) calls this, the preconscious, a store of knowledge we have that we are not consciously aware of and would have difficulty articulating but which is, nonetheless, operational. While other participants are quick to mention the limits of friendship and birth-family ties, in truth they are getting their needs met, though perhaps not in the way they anticipated or most desired. To repeat Giddens' point, behavior has a feedback effect on structure, and so by remaining single they have in fact changed their own notions of who they rely on, who they make a priority, and who makes them a priority.

The issue of boundaries between friendships and erotic friendships is a recurring theme on the television show *Sex and the City*. In one episode, one of the four main female characters suggests "why can't four women be each other's soulmates, and men be just for fun and companionship?" Recently a computer company used this line, or some adaptation of it, as part of their campaign to get people to "think differently." The television writers, the advertiser, and the company they represent, as well as the participant quoted above, may be signaling a change that other participants are toying with or perhaps resisting but which may be becoming a reality through their own and

others' actions: they are in fact looking outside of erotic friendships to find people to make them a priority, and whom they can make a priority. In other words, they are finding support for serious and mundane issues, even if internally or through nonerotic relationships. They are getting to and from the airport and through each "trip" are reshaping their own and others' ideas about how such trips are handled and how the needs the airport symbolizes are met. Through their behaviors, they are creating a new way to live (new, at least, to a large number of similarly-situated women), even if they do not view it as ideal. And in doing this, in finding alternate ways to meet their needs, they are then, as will become evident later in this chapter, questioning the costs involved with looking to an erotic friend for such priority status.

Logistical/Practical Support

The second reason participants want to be in an EF is to gain practical assistance with the tasks of daily life. This is one of the areas where participants distinguish between marital and non-marital relationships. Though their use of "spouse" and "husband" may have been unintentional in some cases (quote C12 is an exception, she makes a clear distinction) the overall impression is that participants' believe they will receive a higher level of practical support from a marital partner than from any other kind of erotic friendship.

I can't tell you how many times I hear this from single women: I just get really tired doing everything myself. Because even though you've got those friends, no one has a vested interest in whether your car works. But when you've got a husband or spouse, they need to help, they help because it will affect them if I'm bitchy when I get home because its not done. There is an element of shared responsibility that just doesn't come with anybody else. [C11]

I'm sure you've heard this from everybody. Sometimes all you want is someone to rake the leaves that you don't have to pay. You just get so tired of doing everything yourself. I mean my to-do list is constantly full, and there is no one to share it unless I'm willing to pay. I really envy that about my married friends, they get to

divide stuff up, they may have more to do but at least they can focus on a few things, like maybe one deals with finances and one keeps the house, it's just some relief from having everything on your shoulders. And maybe you can get that from a boyfriend you live with or spend a lot of time with at each other's place, but its when you are married that you really start investing in "who should do this" "who is better" "who can cook and who is better with cars, or the yard." It's more of a business, and you two see each other as partners for the long haul. [C12]

This is easy, you just want some day to day help. You want someone to clean the dishes, or to cook, or to take out the trash. It's not that you can't do it all yourself, I do, but you just want someone else to be there and to benefit from your efforts, and for you to benefit from theirs. I'm sure it's tiring to be married, maybe more emotionally tiring, but it is very physically tiring to be single. I want to be married partly because I'm just tired, literally tired, exhausted really, from doing everything myself. [C13]

As suggested by Becker (1981), one of the prime motivators to marry is a desire for a "gain," to be able to do more than we could as single people, by developing a division of labor. He suggested that couples marry because they have more to gain through trading their skills, than by not trading and remaining single. In previous generations, the trade typically involved a woman trading homemaking and childrearing skills, and the man trading financial support and leadership in instrumental tasks (Becker, 1981). Becker suggested that overlapping skills (such as two earners or two cooks) reduced the gain to marriage perceived by each partner by reducing the level of mutual dependence.

This aspect of redundancy is less relevant for participants, than the actual division of tasks that need to be accomplished. Participants have taken on many responsibilities in their lives that may have been reserved for married couples in previous generations, such as buying a house, and have developed many skills that were typically thought to be more appropriately the province of men. Though they are changing their own and others' ideas about what single women can and should do through their actions, the desire for practical assistance remains. It is possible that taking on so many responsibilities has the effect of increasing the desire for someone to share them with, even though they know they can do

them on their own. It also appears that as in the issue of being a priority in someone's life, the ability to get something done is less significant than actually having someone who is equally invested in the task or challenge. So again, this type of logistical support may have larger significance for participants. This type of support may be as much about having *someone* to help them, as much as the help itself.

Alternatively, a concern with practical help may reflect participants' awareness that to be in an erotic friendship and to continue to enjoy many of the things they do about their current lifestyle, requires a partner who is willing and able to provide a high level of practical support and who is fair-minded in dividing the daily tasks of life, particularly when children are present. Participants may observe couples with what they perceive as an unequal division of unpaid labor and realize "if the man does not take on his fair share, then I will not be able to continue with my current career or interests." They may understand that parenting involves a "new social contract" because the workplace and needs of children have not changed and adapted in accordance with women's increased commitment to the workplace (Levine, 2003).

For example, at a chance meeting after the interview, one of the participants shared a story about a friend she spoke of during the interview. This friend was, until this year, working at a large and prestigious law firm, earning a six-figure salary, and one year away from partnership. She and her equally successful husband had a 2-year-old child, and were unable to find acceptable in-home child care. The daycare facility near her office required the child be picked up by 6 o'clock, or pay 10 dollars for each minute late. Despite the facility's proximity to her office, it easily took her 45 minutes to exit her high-rise building and parking garage and go the few blocks to the facility in rush hour traffic. Her husband at first agreed to share this burden, but they both soon realized that

to leave by 5:15, they would need to begin wrapping up their day around 4:15. This would not allow them to meet their bosses' or their colleagues' expectations. It became clear a sacrifice would have to be made. While this situation was likely part of a larger system of work-family problems, it resulted in the wife leaving her position at the firm and staying home to care for the child. The husband, who is the wife's age and employed at the same firm, made partner soon after. Her story became symbolic to many who know her: it does not matter how accomplished you are or how much you can financially afford to outsource—the reality is that family and two demanding work schedules (and again, perhaps exaggerated by certain city-specific issues) often cannot easily go together. To balance the two, requires a large amount of compromise and adaptation, and it is often the woman who ends up “compromising” more, at least as perceived by outsiders.

It is likely all of the participants know many similar stories. It may be that the kind of “practical” support the participants are speaking of is symbolic of something larger, just as the airport is. It may be that they realize that practical support in an erotic friendship means constantly having to weigh the costs and benefits of what is best for the individuals and the relationship. An early indicator of being willing to do this in a way that is fair to both parties, may be by providing the kind of practical support participants spoke of—before the stakes get higher.

The Independence/Cost-Benefit Analysis

Alongside participants' desire for practical and emotional priority status, they express a reluctance to give up aspects of their independence they value and wonder about their ability to be interdependent after so much time operating independently. At times it seemed like participants were different people, speaking sometimes of the partnership and sharing they desired, at other times focusing on the independence they

have earned and greatly value. At still other times, as described at the end of this section, they acknowledge that both views “live separately” in their minds and hearts, and that they are at times more aware of one desire over the other but rarely do their preferences come together so as to provide them with clear guidance.

Two themes emerged related to the independence participants have experienced as single adults. First, the pride in their individual accomplishments, and second, a reluctance to give up the level of freedom and independence to which they have grown accustomed. These two themes speak to the challenges single women experience as they weigh the costs and benefits of both single and partnered life, and how that cost/benefit analysis affects their erotic friendships.

Participants are proud of their individual accomplishments. Participants speak with pride of buying homes and cars, enjoying travel on their own and with friends. They are, for the most part, not “waiting” to do anything except to have children (issues related to children are addressed in a later section). They speak with joy of setting up their own living space and managing their finances as they see appropriate. They are proud of the financial, home and life management skills they have developed, and feel this is a benefit of remaining single: they know how to take care of themselves. In response to the question “Is there anything you are waiting to do until you find a romantic partner or marry?” A typical response was “Why would I be waiting to do anything? Other than kids, I can’t imagine why anyone would do that.”

Absolutely not. I have a house, a mortgage, a second mortgage, a car and a time-share. End of that issue huh? Maybe going to Hawaii, maybe I am waiting to do that. [C14]

Hmm, waiting to do. I learned that lesson from my mom. No, I’m not waiting and I got over that idea pretty young when I watched my mom bounce back from divorcing dad and figure out everything on her own. She ended up turning the

whole situation around and leads a very full life. A much better life, for her, than when she was married to dad. She was so dependent when they were married, wasn't even herself. And when they divorced, once she got used to running the house and working and raising us, she just blossomed. A new person, or she says the person she used to be. So, really, if I ever felt that way, watching my mom changed that. I want to be married because I want a partner in life and I want a father for kids, but I don't view life as beginning with him, nor do I want to live as a reflection of who he is and what stuff he wants to do. [C15]

No, I'm not waiting, the last hurdle for me in that department is buying a house, and I'm doing that at the end of the month. I never in a million years would have thought I'd be doing this alone, never thought I'd be in a position to do it financially. I also never thought I'd be doing it without a second income on the mortgage. A few years ago a girlfriend of mine, who is now married and pregnant with her second child, told me this story, the legend of Ilene. The day she closed on her home, she met David, who is now her husband of seven years. I said, 'Oh, so you owned a home before you were married?'. What is this 1930? I can't think this way. She said, yeah, I was in a position to so I did—why not? Exactly Ilene, why not? [C16]

Two respondents said that when they were younger they thought they would feel like life was on hold until marriage, but instead found that you "age into singleness."

Look, you don't just wake up and find yourself 31 and single. You are living life everyday, reading the paper, hearing people talk about trips and movies and restaurants and just stuff that they buy. In the moment it doesn't seem like 'I'm waiting or not waiting', its just living. But I know what the question is getting at, and I used to think I'd feel that way. Like when I was in my early twenties and saw single people at work doing things, I was like wow, I wouldn't do that, like go to Hawaii, without a boyfriend, or a husband. But like so many other illusions of youth, that one fades and you don't even think about it you just make your reservations and go. That doesn't mean you wouldn't rather do it with someone else, it just means its not a deal breaker. Now, [pause] buying a house, that is different, that does take getting over a little resistance, yours and your family's, but so many people do it, and here real estate is as much an investment as a sign you are settled, so yeah that was harder, and you do pause and say 'I'm doing this alone' and you cry your first night in the house, but even that, it just seems irresponsible to be renting an apartment in Buckhead when you are in your thirties, so you just do it. And then you learn, its not that hard, and then you feel like—I can do anything. [C17]

No, I've pretty much gotten everything, a house, a car, I travel, whatever I want. All these things are a function of age and experience, the possibilities seem different, it's a progression of what seems possible. I have many less boundaries to what I think is possible. [C18]

In contrast, two participants acknowledged waiting to do several things until marriage. Interestingly, they acknowledged this with a note of embarrassment, as if admitting to something shameful.

This is a little embarrassing, and my friends hate it when I talk like this, but I know just what you mean about waiting, and that is exactly how I feel, like I am on hold. I want a house, a dog, and of course kids, but I'm not doing any of that until I get married. That is what you get when you get married. And even with my friends' pep talks I can't "single-woman power talk" my way into feeling differently. I used to think my other friends were lying and they felt the same way but were being proud. Now I think I'm in the minority. Maybe they are handling single life better than I am, but I will say with no shame whatsoever, I want to be married, and I will find someone. I'm just more committed than they are. I date more, I do a lot of things they are just tired of doing. There I said it, and I don't believe I single-handedly set the women's movement back 20 years. [C19]

I'm not interested in buying a house on my own. My impression of a house is that there is more than one person in it. It is just a big commitment to live someplace, and I don't want to do that before I find someone. I like to travel and I would probably do that more if I had someone, would do more camping. I'm not going to get a dog probably til I'm married. One, because I'm more likely to have a house, and two, I think a dog takes more than one person to care for it. Also, I don't know if Atlanta is where I want to live the rest of my life, but I'm not going to make that drastic move on my own. I'll just wait and see where we want to live. I know I sound like a weirdo saying this, my friends aren't waiting for anything, but this is how I honestly feel, and how I am living, with a lot of anticipation. [C20]

The participants quoted above are an exception, all others spoke of enjoying their independence and not waiting to do things they wanted to do, or buy things they wanted to buy.

Not only are participants proud of what they have done, purchased, and accomplished as single adults, the second theme that emerged is a reluctance to give up many aspects of their independence in exchange for the relationship they desire. Participants indicate that over time they developed a "need" for their own space and to significant amounts of time alone. Participants also indicate a discomfort with needing to achieve consensus before making a plan or purchase. Some participants expressed

contempt for friends who need to “run something by their husband” which the participants read as “getting permission.” They are not sure of their willingness to plan their life around someone else’s needs, for example, to move because their partner has an opportunity in another city. They wonder if their reluctance to give up these aspects of their independence affects their willingness to be in an EF. They view losing some independence as a cost of being in an EF, and bearing this “cost” requires an awfully big benefit to balance out that cost. Some days the aloneness and the magnitude of their responsibility does not seem worth the cost, other days the solitude and independence is the prize they have worked for.

Grass is greener on either side. Married friends are envious of me of my single life. I’m envious of them or their married life. On day to day, I have a lot of freedom to do whatever I want to do and I don’t have to consult anyone as far as making plans. That’s something I’ve taken for granted in being single. I don’t have to report to anyone. I’m on my schedule. That’s something that when you do get involved in a relationship, in a marriage, you’ve got to be able to compromise and you have a lot more responsibilities to your husband or to your family, your children, pets. That’s something, I am very active and independent and that is going to be a difficult adjustment to being in a serious relationship or married. Some days, I am convinced I could never succeed at that kind of compromise, I’ve just done my own thing for too long, in too many ways. [C21]

I have supported myself since I was 21, have always earned enough at whatever stage to be happy, to have a nice place and nice car, nice clothes, fun vacations. Well now, 10 years later, I have my tastes, I have my ways. Its almost a little dangerous to be successful and single, you become very aware of all the reasons you don’t need someone, that if they aren’t pretty close to perfect, you’d rather just do things your own way. I think people downplay this aspect of single life: your whole life is set up around you. No kids to save for, no compromising, just doing what you want to do. And if you can’t enjoy that, than you aren’t enjoying your life. But if you do enjoy it, it makes being in a relationship very difficult. I had a hard time when I first realized this, because I realize this is going to be there in any relationship, to some degree, I’m going to have to give up what I prize about my life, but if I don’t, I’ll keep having the part of my life that I don’t like, being on my own all the time. [C22]

I imagine you will hear this a lot, but as much as you want to be in a relationship, you’re just not willing to settle—and it’s not because you think you are so hot, its just because . . . why would you, where’s the gain? I mean consciously you say

you'll adjust, but as soon as they start talking about changing something in your life its like the emotional calculator comes out, is he good enough for me to change my plan to live in Chicago, is he someone who I would give up my cat for, sometimes its even like, 'he doesn't like Chinese food? This will never work.' You don't like to think of yourself as set in your ways, but how can you not be? That's why people tell single people not to get a house, its not that you can't sell the house if you want to get a place together, its that once you have done all that on your own, set up the place, bought real furniture, well, the offer has to be pretty attractive to beat coming home to a place that is set up just to suit me. And you don't want to think that way, but you do. I see it over and over again with friends. [C23]

Yeah, I could take men more seriously, men who like me like me because I pay attention to them, but then it tends to fade, I take them less and less seriously. I tend to choose men I won't take seriously. They don't meet some major criteria, that spot comes out and then things deteriorate. I don't know if I'm just afraid of giving up my independence or what, but I keep finding myself with men who just don't match up to my expectations and there is just no reason for me to compromise—and I'm not talking about crazy expectations, I know where I fall in the market and I'm in tune with the idea that the man is going to be comparable, but I find, and a lot of women I know find this, the men just aren't working as hard to have it all together, to work, take care of themselves, give of themselves. And I can't see compromising on any of those things, because they seem pretty basic to me. And, my life now just isn't that bad. I mean I want a partner, I want to get married very badly, but I'm not giving up what I've got, or the possibility of finding something better, just to not be alone. [C24]

When I think about it, talk about it with my friends, we agree it makes dating more interesting, we can be pickier, we don't need a man, we can take more time, we say "he's ok" and we don't need that basic thing anymore, so we can wait for something more. [C25]

It is unclear to the participants what has replaced those services formerly provided by men as a benefit to being in a relationship; as the respondent quoted in C23 stated, "where is the gain?" In speaking about their independence, participants identify some possible gains, but the desire for those gains is at times perceived as not worth the cost of losing their treasured independence.

That's something that when you do get involved in a relationship, in a marriage, you've got to be able to compromise and you have a lot more responsibilities to your husband or to your family, your children, pets. That's something, I am very active and independent and that is going to be a difficult adjustment to being in a serious relationship or married. Some days, I am convinced I could never succeed at

that kind of compromise, I've just done my own thing for too long, in too many ways. [C26]

I mean consciously you say you'll adjust, but as soon as they start talking about changing something in your life its like the emotional calculator comes out, is he good enough for me to change my plan to live in Chicago, is he someone who I would give up my cat for, sometimes its even like, 'he doesn't like Chinese food? This will never work.' You don't like to think of yourself as set in your ways, but how can you not be? [C27]

And, my life now just isn't that bad. I mean I want a partner, I want to get married very badly, but I'm not giving up what I've got, or the possibility of finding something better, just to not be alone. [C28]

Several participants conveyed the dissonance they felt by expressing differing views at different points in the interview. The respondent quoted in C28 returned to the issue later as she realized her dislike of compromise and her fear of the costs of being in a relationship "lived separately" from her dislike of being on her own.

Thinking back to what we talked about earlier, when I'm thinking about how I'm not interested in giving something up for whatever guy, I don't know if I weigh that against the good parts of the relationship, its like those thoughts are in isolation. I mean, if he does something to annoy me, I'm not thinking well would I rather be pissed off when he does this certain thing or alone. I don't think like that. It's like the desire for a relationship somehow lives separately from the costs of the particular guy. Maybe that's why I'm in the situation I'm in. [C28-2]

Perhaps the following quote best summarizes participants' ongoing reflexive debate over the costs and benefits of erotic friendships:

I struggle with this a lot. You get used to being in charge, and are taken by surprise when you hear your friends refer to themselves and their boyfriends as if they are one person, or have one life. Even my married friends, it still sometimes strikes me as odd that they have to ask permission to go out, or to buy certain things. I mean I know that is what a relationship is about, sharing and not just doing what you want, but honestly, it just seems strange to me now. He would have to be pretty awesome before I'd be willing to do that.

[Later in the interview, same respondent] I just don't know how much of what I love about my life I'd be willing to give up, and I know you get things in return, but sometimes it just seems safer to be in charge of your own happiness, I've seen so many people, men and women, just give and get screwed. [Discussion of mother and sister's divorce] But sometimes, I don't feel negative about relationships at all,

I just want someone to share stuff with and I'm totally aware of what my choices have cost me. I guess that is the way to explain it, *some days you see the costs, some days you see the benefits, but rarely does it all fit together and just make sense.* [C29, emphasis supplied]

Still, the desire for the erotic friendships remains even as participants actively weigh the costs and benefits, and, importantly, as they continue to live as single women. Participants are aware of their dissonant desires and are hoping to develop EFs that provide emotional and practical support, while also allowing them to preserve some aspects of their current lives they have worked hard to achieve. As suggested by Alexander (1988), people today struggle and innovate as they try to develop and maintain relationships that meet *their* needs, and not the needs of some social structure. The above quotes demonstrate that process and sense of struggle.

Pressure to Marry and Remove Cloud of Suspicion

This subsection and the one that follows, "Cognizance of Flaws of Marriage," focus specifically on data regarding marriage, as opposed to the broader category of erotic friendships.

As participants continue to try to make their views and preferences "all fit together" they are dealing with societal and parental pressure to be married. They characterize this pressure as a cloud that hangs over their head as they continue to live as single women. This cloud may be somewhat thinned if they enter into an EF, but participants express that only when married does the cloud fully disappear. Until then, to many observers, they remain in limbo and "suspect."

Despite concerns about this cloud, participants view themselves, and believe they are viewed by others, as pioneers—part of the first generation where it is a viable option for large numbers of women to live as unmarried adults. They are proud of their ability to

live on their own, and to be mature and responsible enough to make “adult” decisions and purchases on their own. This sense of both awe and concern is also shared by their parents. Participants know their parents are impressed with all their daughters do and manage. There is a sense of pride that respondents take in realizing that their married friends and parents often say “I don’t know how you do it.” Still, despite being impressed, the bottom line remains the same: it would be preferable for all concerned that they be married.

I can almost see my mom’s jaw drop when I tell her about the things I do, at work and at home. She just can’t believe I make so many important decisions, and have so much responsibility without some man to share it with. It’s funny, I sense that feeling when I talk about work, and when I talk about running my house or just deciding to take a trip. This kind of independence, and I don’t mean it in a rah-rah feminist way, just literally the way in which I make decisions without a lot of input, and bear the consequences, its just clearly foreign to her. My dad is also impressed, but I think he is also really sad for me. He knows I’m ok, but just wants to know someone is taking care of me. He sees I can take care of myself, but he doesn’t...he doesn’t really feel it. I know he would sleep better if I were married. [laughing] We all would. [C30]

I can tell you what they say. They say that as long as I’m happy, they are happy. But I think my mom still has anxiety about the fact that I’m still single, I know she has anxiety about that fact that I am still single. At the same time, she is so impressed with me and all I’ve done. The places I’ve lived, my education, my high-powered jobs. I’m just an enigma to her sometimes. And I think her friends don’t help matters since most of their daughters are lower key, married, kids. I’m like the exotic one, but the one everyone says “what a shame” about, but I bet the most interesting conversations are about me, I give them something to gossip about. I don’t know, I suppose its sincere concern plus some jealousy that makes them talk that way. [C31]

They would love for me to be married so they would know that I would have the financial security, well, not just that, but just general security. They would really love to marry me off but they don’t want me to marry someone for the wrong reason. And now that they see all that I do on my own, they know I’m going to be fine no matter what. And honestly, some days they even seem like, awed by me, like they are just so impressed that I grew up and became someone who is not dependent on anyone for getting things done. My parents are the greatest. They’re wonderful people, and I know my lifestyle is hard on them, they just worry. They would like me just to be at the next stage of happiness, and the next stage is marriage. [C32]

I can think of a friend from college who got married, had kids, and she is not particularly happy, yet my family would prefer if I led her life than mine. This just happens to women. I see so many women in my family who just go where their husbands go, give up their jobs. When I speak with my grandma there is a lack of understanding of how I live my life, but maybe there is also some envy. She got married when she was 16, she didn't really have any other options. Imagine how remote my life must seem to her. She feels sorry for me, but I'm also a super star to her, like I'm the first woman ever to do it. [C33]

Closely related to the desire to fulfill parental expectations, is a desire to fulfill what participants perceive as a societal expectation that by 30, women should be married. Several participants said that one of the most difficult aspects of being single after a certain age is that there is a culpability or "guiltiness" associated with it. The nature of the culpability is often expressed in one of the following ways: she must be too overweight, picky, or gay; a workaholic; have some mental or emotional problems; or be scarred by some incident. Rather than accept singleness as a valid option, participants feel others often look for an explanation.

Women used to be motivated by finding financial stability, now, I think it's more, it's sad to say, but my perception is I think it's just societal acceptance. That when you're 30 years old, that's what normal people do. They get married, they have children and I think it's societal norms that reinforce those expectations. It's society, it's also a lot of parental pressure. It's a lot of peer pressure because all of your other friends are married with children. That's what you're supposed to be doing. Any variation of that norm is just strange, and people want an explanation as to why. [C34]

I think Helen Fielding started to touch on it in *Bridget Jones*, but she didn't talk about it directly. You always hear people saying to women, "you're too picky," how common is that? How many people do you know who say, "you are just too picky." That is the mother's mantra to her child, its in *Kissing Jessica Stein* too, everyone is telling us we are too picky, or wondering what else is wrong with us. I've heard that, I've heard my five year old g-d daughter say that, and her mother started laughing. That it is my fault I'm single. I think no matter how far we've come, its still the case. . . . And dating doesn't solve it either, doesn't get them off your back. You either are or are not married at this age. No in-between. It's like we are too old to be dating, and if you live with someone, it better be leading to engagement pretty soon or you are "wasting your time." [C35]

Sometimes I think like I'm turning the tables, people are like "why are you still single?" and I want to ask "why are you still married?" because people assume that if you are married you are doing the right thing. . . . Even if you are happy dating or whatever, or happy single, you are still put on one side of a divide, married or not. The adults are married, the kids are still dating. Or, they just assume something is wrong with you and then they feel sorry for you. Like you couldn't 'get' a husband for some reason, so they better not bring it up. Sad to think how far we have come on this topic, and how far we have not come. [C36]

In many ways there are societal pressures on women that aren't on men. I think people look at me and think, woh, she's 34, why isn't she married and I don't think they think that way about a 34-year-old man. They think he's not married by choice. But with a woman, it's because no one has asked her yet, or she must be doing something wrong. I think that is a big thing, I have talked to my girlfriends about this, there is a certain culpability that society puts on women, that it is their fault, like, she didn't date enough because she was working, or she must be difficult, or she doesn't keep herself, she is overweight, she doesn't dress . . . there is a certain personal guiltiness as to why a woman is single and you never hear that talk about men. It's terrible to think you are being judged this way. [C37]

Several participants mentioned that this suspect view of their singleness can translate into their own personal suspicion about their level of culpability—that at times they believe their singleness must reflect some problem within them that needs to be fixed.

A lot of times I think there isn't anything wrong with me, and if I were a single guy I'd love to date me. Everyone says I just haven't met the right person yet. But, you go on enough dates and you do all this stuff and you start thinking, maybe it is me, maybe I'm too picky, maybe there's something wrong with me or maybe I'm not attractive enough or I'm not smart enough or I'm too smart. You could go on for months, questioning yourself, reevaluating yourself, your choices. It is truly exhausting, I'd just like to find someone and get on with things. I imagine married people are not constantly asking themselves if they are good enough. [C38]

I'm in therapy to figure out why my life is like this, why I'm not in a relationship. There just has to be a reason, and I need to figure it out soon. We talk about my parents' relationship, past relationships, and she thinks I'm just afraid of getting hurt like my mom did, like I have been in the past. I also think, well I struggle with my weight and I just get so tired of fixing myself to go out all the time, and that is what you have to do, cause the other women are. Sometimes I think its not about me, its just something that happened. But other times I'm convinced a little therapy, a little Weight Watchers, and I'll be a wife in no time. [laughing] Just one of the many emotional roller coasters we single women spend a lot of time on. [C39]

Participants report that their life is an open book to family, friends, acquaintances—something to be discussed and analyzed often and publicly. Participants suggest that, unlike marital problems or fertility problems, people feel comfortable speaking openly and asking candid questions about single women's relationships or relationship status. Participants speculate this is in part due to the "culpability" aspect, and in part because others assume single women do not want to be single.

It's acquaintances, people that don't know you so well, and it can be uncomfortable. Sometimes people are being nice, coming from a good place. I distinguish that from the self-affirmations that people make to you, that they pretend are about you. I get the sense that women who see the life that I lead, that is pretty much under my control, they say things like "You'll understand when you have a husband, or a kid" or whatever. If they were concerned about me, they would phrase it as a question, not a directive, not so presumptuous, it's as if their own ego is making them affirm their own choices to me. And somehow they get a boost by highlighting the distinctions between my life and theirs. They like highlighting that I'm the one that hasn't done what I'm supposed to, and they have. [C40]

If I ever want to stay home, friends are like, why aren't you going out? Like I don't have any time to waste so I better get out there. Or I'll be at an affair and someone will say "oh you are so beautiful why don't you have a boyfriend?" Its like when other people start to talk about it, it throws me. Drives me up a wall. I don't want anyone to feel sorry for me, I almost feel like it is this pity thing and there is no understanding that I'm ok, that I'm happy, that it doesn't bother me. I don't know how to describe it, I just don't want people feeling sorry for me. I was at dinner with some friends and someone shouts from across the dinner table "well have you met his kids yet?" And I'm thinking, why is it that when you are single, your life is an open book. Like I would yell across "how's it going trying to get pregnant?" You wouldn't say that, but when you are single its like people feel its all right there, you can ask anything. I would never ask my friends how their relationships are, like "Have you had an argument with your husband lately?" People will ask you anything. People just jump on anything. And somehow its supposed to be ok, and I'm supposed to be eager to talk about it because we all know I'm trying to "solve" this problem of mine. [C41]

It's like I have people at work who are like, oh you're so cute, so nice, so funny—so why don't you have a boyfriend? And there is no good answer to that, no one I'm interested in, or no one is asking. And when people say that, they mean it as compliment, sincerely and sweetly, but . . . if that is pressure, I guess that's as close as it comes. And I just don't like it, feeling like they are worrying about me, wondering what is wrong with me, or feeling sorry for me. It's like, just mind your

own business, even though I know they mean well, its still sort of intrusive. No, it is very intrusive. [C42]

Participants are still affected by a desire to please their parents and fulfill societal expectations, even if their behaviors do not conform to societal norms. More significantly, participants struggle with their own conventional impulses as they continue their lives as single women and contemplate how best to meet their emotional and practical needs. Participants are actively battling their suspicion that not having met the societal expectation to be married represents a larger problem within themselves. There seems to be an ideological tug-of-war in their own minds, a struggle between accepting that they are doing well on their own, leading rich and rewarding lives, versus the fear that being alone represents more than a choice among life options but rather a personal deficiency.

These feelings of self-doubt, perhaps even of guilt or shame, may have contributed to the difficulties experienced in recruiting participants. As described in Chapter 2, the recruitment process proved to be more challenging than anticipated. Potential participants did not want to discuss issues related to their singleness. It seemed there was a stigma attached to even being asked to participate, to having been identified as meeting the sample criteria of not currently being in an ongoing EF. The people who were asked to assist in the location of participants reported that responses to their request were often met with anger and strongly worded rejections of the request, “Why on earth would I speak to someone I don’t know about this?” and “Why did you pick me?” and “Why would my situation be of interest to anyone but me?” “Doesn’t she realize how embarrassing and upsetting this is?” or “Who would speak to a stranger about being 30 something and single?” These responses were not anticipated.

As discussed in the previous chapter, large numbers of women are spending more years as single adults. Women's median age at first marriage has risen by 4 years over the last 30 years, from 20.8 in 1970 to 25.1 in 2000, and in the past 30 years the number of 30 to 34 year old women who have not married has more than tripled, from 6% in 1970 to 22% in 2000 (Goldstein & Kenney, 2001). These data suggest the participants are not unusual or aberrant in their single status. Still, however, feelings of self-doubt remain and may explain the difficulties experienced in recruiting participants.

Cognizance of the Flaws of Marriage

Feelings of doubt or concern about single life live alongside equally strong doubts and concerns about married life. Participants are cognizant of the many difficulties and challenges associated with marriage but have trouble envisioning a preferable relationship status. This was true of all respondents. While acknowledging the problems they associate with marriage, perhaps even the unlikelihood that they would marry or their reluctance to make the sacrifices necessary for marriage, all still hope to marry.

I look at people who are married sometimes, they seem so happy, but when you peel back the layers of the onion you find a lot of discontent and lot of people thinking and wondering did I make the right choice. I look at my sister and her husband. They look great, and I don't doubt that they married the right person. They've been married three years, they have a baby a little under a year and life is stressful. Everything is hard. And my sister is always stressed out. She is type A, very type A, and so is he actually. We recently took a trip together, we were meeting parents and we are flying in the plane and it is myself and my sister and brother in law and the baby and just the stuff that you have to cart with you when a baby is 9 months old. It is all so stressful and it is such a stark contrast to me and my life where it is me and my friends and my job and just roll with these things. I'm watching this marriage and its just bicker, bicker, bicker and no one is really upset, at the end of the day it will all pass over. It just seemed so stifling, so tough, a lot of muttering under the breath, which I just can't stand and when we got to North Carolina, I stayed in the same hotel room with my parents who have been married for 38 years and the two just bicker, bicker, and they aren't getting divorced, they aren't going anywhere, its just how you work things out. But it just seemed really unattractive to me. Not that they don't have good marriages, it just sort of exposed the underbelly. And I have some coworkers and they have marital issues and I just

wonder is anybody really happy. There is this hellfire rush to get married and then its like is this what it is? Not that I have unrealistic expectations, because yeah, marriage is taking out the garbage and the sewage and the burst pipe and the toilet overrunning and we have asbestos, and all these things that are not sexy or glamorous and certainly aren't Young and the Restless. I just can't get my mind around if marriage is a constant state of wondering if you made the right choice, but yet not really doing anything about it and bickering your way through it. Thanks I'll pass. But of course, that's not how I feel, I don't want to pass, I still want it, even though some days I ask myself why. But if I don't ever have it, I will be . . . I don't even want to talk about it. It's just something we need. Don't ask me to explain it, it just is. And I don't know too many women who feel they don't. [C43]

I have a friend, for the life of me I don't understand their relationship, they bicker all the time. Maybe she just said, "I've had enough of this dating thing." It makes her happy. Maybe she just checked out from singledom. She sees us going on date after date, or liking someone and then being dumped, being the one who ends the relationship and maybe it's not a lifestyle she wants or envies. For some women, probably a lot of women, it's like any marriage beats no marriage. [C44]

I have very few friends whose marriages I respect. Sometimes it's clear to me, that for a lot of people, the best part about being married is that they are not single, don't have to keep thinking about it. My best friend got married very young, he is very ambitious and they live in a 2.5 million dollar house, but he has nothing to do with the kids, she is basically a single parent. He feels he's being a good husband and provider by providing all this stuff. I have another friend and she seems to have a decent marriage but she definitely wears the pants, what she says goes. I have very few friends where I see the balance. I also have a lot of friends who are divorced. Two friends who got married after law school and are on their second marriages. I think I used to really want to get married. I don't have such an idyllic view, or this star in the sky that I can't wait to reach. I have enough married people in my life, I see their struggles, see how taxing it is, and how difficult it is. I have a cousin and she has this idyllic view "they are so happy, they have the life." I don't look at my friend in this house and she has 40 hour a week housekeeper and tennis court and a pool and more jewelry and unbelievable trips. I think I feel sorry for her, her husband is never home, his family is not his priority. That is the thing about marriage, our expectations are either out of line, or the reality is just not what it is cracked up to be. That is not to say I don't want it, or that I don't believe it can be great. I know it can, my parents have an enviable relationship. I just think if we were honest we'd acknowledge that that is not the way most marriages are. [C45]

Despite their awareness of problems, participants are unable to imagine an equally valid alternative to marriage. No one spoke of "hoping for" a cohabiting relationship with a high level of emotional intimacy. No one wanted to remain single. No one spoke of wanting to maintain casual sexual relationships. No one spoke of desiring a series of

monogamous relationships that met their needs at that moment and then dissolved as needs changed, and the relationship became less fulfilling. They suggest marriage may not be optimal, but do not go so far as to suggest what may be a better or equally good alternative, for themselves or for women generally. To the contrary, despite an awareness of the flaws, each participant stated a desire to marry.

According to Alexander (1988), “the ‘family’ has an aura of objectivity that preempts individual creativity and the rebellion against norms” (p. 93). Professor of Social Policy Joy Rice (1994) refers to this difficulty in imagining equally valid alternatives to marriage, even while aware of its drawbacks, as a deficit-comparison model. The deficit-comparison model suggests that any variation on the traditional family is viewed as “less than” in comparison, the assumption being that everyone is supposed to marry, have children, and stay married.

As discussed by participants when addressing issues of independence, there are many advantages associated with “extra” years living as single women, such as freedom to focus on one’s own development, to develop life management skills, and to pursue educational and career opportunities without needing to accommodate another person’s needs or preferences. Participants also highlight the pride and awe their parents feel in knowing their daughters are so competent, so able to live and function independently. Still, despite being impressed, parents prefer their daughters to marry, and participants themselves hope to marry—no one mentioned that they or their parents did not care about whether they married, or that they or their parents preferred they be single. Participants are aware of their parents’ preferences, their own preferences, and of the way their single status is viewed by others. In this way, their singleness acts as a cloud hanging over them that participants would like to remove. Though again, through their

continued life as a single person, their continued self-reflexivity and through others viewing their lives, participants are likely changing the nature of that cloud, even as they seek to get out from under it.

A Realistic Assessment of Options

As participants contemplate removing the “cloud of singleness” and the varied costs and benefits of EFs, they often express the need to reenvision what their potential partners may be like, and what their family life may look like. Participants believe their potential partners will likely be in their late 30s or 40s, possibly with children and probably divorced. They assume that by 30, the well-adjusted, marriage-minded men have all gotten married, and they are skeptical of the never-married and currently single men over 30. They assume any partner they find will have lingering “issues” related to previous serious relationships or marriage (i.e., be in some way scarred). They believe their first family will include step-children, the aftermath of divorce, and/or emotional baggage from previous EFs. The participants are struggling to integrate these beliefs into their view of erotic friendships and family life. Many spoke of trying to make that adjustment in their mind’s eye, so they would be more open should they meet a desirable partner with a “history.” One respondent expressed it quite bluntly,

If you can’t make the jump from storybook wedding to having his kids as your bridal party, you may not be cut out for the options that are out there. [C46]

Other participants described the thinking and reasoning process as they gradually accepted that their dating market, and possibly their first marriage, would be different from what they had previously envisioned.

No matter how much you know this is the case, you still hold on to the image of yourself in a white dress, with your college girlfriends all around and dad giving you away. I just don’t think adults do that, yet I can’t envision the appropriate way to do it when you both have houses, don’t need dishes and a toaster, and when the

idea of your dad giving you away is laughable. I mean I've had many partners, and if I get married, so has he, are we really going to pretend the whole . . . white thing. But what else is there, eloping seems like something sneaky, I'm not embarrassed, I'm just older. . . . It took me a long time to get this image out of my head and take seriously the men I was meeting, and who were interested in me. They were older, often divorced, sometimes still married, some with kids. Now the people you talk to who are still in their 20s, they may not be experiencing this yet, but something really odd, almost surreal happens in the next 5 years, their dating market changes completely. [C47]

It's more that I worry that if I meet the guy, that he might have been married before. Or that he may have kids. It's not such a concern, but I didn't envision that as part of my earlier plan. If he has kids, so then he has kids. I guess its because I've seen so many people I know get divorced. And no one was a bad guy, it just didn't work. Sometimes they have kids. . . . Coming from a family where no one got divorced, I've really changed my view about what leads people to take that step. I've really changed on that, it's not quite as black and white an issue as I thought when growing up. Its not like someone is a damaged person or less than, just because they had a marriage that failed. I say that, but it's still hard for me to make that adjustment in my head. [C48]

Until recently I didn't want to date anyone with kids, but I'm even starting to reconsider on that. I think originally one of the reasons I didn't want to was because I guess I don't have a great relationship with my step-mom. She is my role model in step-parenting or step-mothering. I kind of said I'd been on the other side of that and I don't know if I like how it works. I think now especially as I get older, you're gonna run into that more often and I love kids and I love friends' kids. I just haven't done it yet, but I've been thinking about it, I would date someone with kids. [C49]

I think women's dating market changes dramatically in their 30s. Suddenly, we move into another generation of men. Men our age know that if they date us, we are very marriage-minded, not because we need their money, but because we need to settle down if we are going to have children, and even separate from that, we are just not interested in dating anymore. And, I'm not saying they are wrong in this impression, its true for a lot of people. Its like we are, by definition, desperate. Have others said this? You feel like if you are over 30 and single, that "desperate" is in a balloon over your head, even if you don't feel that way. I have considered lying about my age just to rid the guy of that impression—even guys I may not be interested in, its just like I feel he is going to pigeonhole me as soon as he learns I'm over 30. I lie to myself about it, so maybe on some level, I do feel desperate. And the strangest thing, it totally didn't feel this way in my 20s, even 29, somehow 32 is a completely different story. And I think that is the truth, even if other women don't say it. [C50]

I think a lot of women my age think they are getting men off of divorces anyway. And that is a core part of dating at this age, being open to something different than what you planned. [C51]

These quotes illustrate the continuing conceptual staying-power of the traditional family model in the participants' efforts to adapt to present and ever-changing circumstances. Participants recognize that what "family" may look like changes as they age and as the social world changes. They are actively working to adapt their expectations and to embrace what their experience tells them they are likely to find. Still, changing their expectations and reenvisioning what their family life may look like does not come easily. Many participants continue to hold on to a narrow vision of family and have difficulty maintaining an openness to alternatives.

But even though it is difficult at times, participants continue to work at expanding their view by incorporating new information and new options. This notion of active and ongoing development and effort is one of the central tenets of new action theory. Supporters of this perspective reject Parson's (1949) and others' structural-functionalist view of family as reified. Instead, families, like any other social patterns, are "produced" and "created" by the actions of persons operating within the social structure and cultural milieu that surrounds them (Maines, 2000). Phrased a different way, Scanzoni et al. (1989) state

from the perspective of a dynamic systems theory *persons create institutions*, the process of creation becomes ultimately more significant than its product, although by no means are products unimportant. As Simmel suggests, any emergent product stands in perpetual tension with the forces around it leading persons to alter the product accordingly. (p. 53)

An example of such adaptation and the impact of cultural and social support for adaptation can be viewed in Sweden, where families take many forms, and marriage is not regarded as the highest form, or the form which best serves societal needs (Levin and Trost, 1999; Bernhardt and Goldscheider, 2001). In Sweden, social programs support less restrictive gender roles for men and a more fluid view of family life. Programs including

state sponsored health and child care affect people's views of the purpose and role of family, and allow people to develop relationships and families less constrained by a particular model or family form, or particular gender roles.

As suggested by NAT, the surrounding environment and culture may motivate people either to conform willingly to its opportunities and/or enable them to innovate, as it has in Sweden. Or, it may force them to comply to its demands unwillingly and/or constrain them by shutting out alternative options, as some participants feel is happening to them. If the environment enables people to innovate, the new social patterns that persons create are themselves subject to alterations, either because of shifts in their surrounding context and/or changes in the persons' objectives. The essential dynamic of a new action model is captured by contrasting it with functionalism's view of social patterns as static: "In Parsons' writing there is no true embrace of the idea that structure is being continuously opened up and reconstructed by the problem-solving behavior of individuals responding to concrete situations (Selznick, 1961, p. 934).

Participants' are clearly experiencing this challenge to develop a more flexible view of relationships, marriage, and family, absent social support for alternative models. Regardless of what their stated preference may be, or what the larger culture promotes, their environment—their milieu—is forcing them to adapt and innovate, to reenvision what their own erotic friendships and family life will look like, though their environment also constrains them by not offering the kind of social support for innovation that is currently found in Sweden.

Having witnessed how quickly their dating market changed, they are also aware of the need to continue expanding their view of erotic friendships and family, as in this continuation of quote C51.

And that is a core part of dating at this age, being open to something different than what you planned. I have a friend, she says she's open to dating women, now I'm not that open, but she isn't even gay, she just says what she is looking for is changing and she's more focused on what she can get out of a relationship, less on whether it fits hers or anybody else's image of what a marriage looks like. She says this represents real growth on her part, and says it took a lot of work to get past the fact she wasn't going to have what her parents had. She feels that time has come and gone. I'm not there yet, but I relate to the . . . thinking process that brought her to where she is. [C51-2]

Even if participants desire traditional roles or relationships, it may be that their social environment requires ongoing adaptation. While participants are clearly struggling with the need for constant reevaluation and adaptation, the debate also continues between family scholars. In response to Popenoe's (1996) statement that "the endless negotiation [required to maintain variety] is no way to run a family or a culture." Scanzoni (in press) suggests that any attempt to impose or even strongly support one model or script for relationships or family life supposes that economic, social, political, and technological forces are standing still long enough to write any family script. Such an effort, according to Scanzoni, is akin to "changing the tires on a moving car."

As suggested by Giddens (1984), the reflexive nature of modern life, with input coming from cultural mediators, our own life experience, and from the world of "experts" necessitates that we examine and reexamine our wants, needs, and preferences. This reexamination then affects our actions, which in turn affect the structures with which we interact. This process of change and opening up to new possibilities is clearly demonstrated in the findings related to work, money and mothering, particularly the issue of becoming a single parent.

Work, Money, and Mothering

The final group of findings relates to participants' views on work, money and mothering. These subjects are intertwined such that they cannot be presented separately

without distorting their views. The desire and hope to one day have a child shapes participants' view of work and what a potential EF should earn, as well as their views about their own career aspirations and earning potential.

The participants' responses reflect a high degree of self-reflexivity, struggle and ongoing, active efforts to make decisions in their best interests—and to figure out what those best interests are. They express pride in their work and earning power and want to find a partner who is similarly ambitious and successful. They want a potential partner to recognize and respect the importance of work in their lives, but also to be emotionally and financially supportive of their decision to stay home with young children, *if* that is what they ultimately decide to do.

Also presented are participants' views of single parenting. The participants feel they will have to make a decision about this issue in the near future, and they are aware of the child-rearing options they have as financially secure women. Throughout these discussions, the theme of struggle to reconcile a changed contextual experience with lingering traditional values, coping with rapid change in what is possible, and the resulting ambivalence is present, perhaps more strongly than in any of the other findings.

It is clear from the strength of their statements that participants have given issues related to work, money, and mothering a considerable amount of thought. It is important to note that their stated desire to take a break from their careers to raise children is hypothetical and, given their current status as single and their views of single parenting, a remote possibility in the near future. Still, the strength of their intentions to leave the workplace are worthy of note (especially given participants' equally strong views of the benefits of financial independence) even if these statements may not accurately forecast their future behavior.

All participants stated their desire for an EF is largely motivated by a desire to find a partner for child-bearing and rearing. Participants expressed strong feelings of anxiety related to finding a partner in time to bear children. During the time of the interviews, Sylvia Hewlitt's (2002) book, *Creating a Life: Professional Women and the Quest for Children*, was in the news and popular media daily. Hewlitt suggests that many professional women were waiting too long to marry and/or have children and that this delay often resulted in unanticipated, age-related fertility problems. Several respondents referred to Hewlitt's book and the media response to it during the interview and said that her book had added to the already-strong pressure they felt to find a partner and have children.

This was the clearest example of Giddens' (1984) reference to the impact of "expert" information on the reflexive process. People spoke more often of the issue of aging out of fertility as presented in the media, rather than speaking about examples from their friends, family, or acquaintances. This may be because they do not know many people who have faced this issue or perhaps because this is an issue that is rarely spoken about outside of close friends and family. Or, as presented by the media sources, it may be a "new" problem facing women of this pioneering generation who have the option of postponing marriage and child-bearing while pursuing their careers.

That book! As if I wasn't freaked out enough already. I work in public health, I didn't need a reminder about how my eggs are all dying. I can't bear to think I'll age out of having children. But I can't just make a husband. I must admit, it got me back out there. I'd slipped into a pattern of not actively looking, and now I'm focused again, going on-line, going to singles events. Even more than a husband, I want a baby. And the whole doing-it-alone thing is not for me. So out I go. [laughing] Hi I'm [Jane], want to make babies with me? Do you think that line would work? It's just a wonder I'm still single. [D1]

I guess it's just the anxiety of wanting to meet someone. I want to get married. I want to have children. I'm 31. All I see in the news is my eggs are going downhill,

my eggs are going downhill. So, I'll come home from work, and I'll be like I just want to sit and watch TV. A friend will call and say let's go to this Jewish single activity. I'll be like I don't really want to go but this could be the chance, so I better go, I better just put on my happy face, my cute outfit and walk out the door. Just worrying that I'll miss an opportunity. [D2]

I would like to have a husband before children. I wouldn't consider kids on my own now, but I might later. I have a friend who said at a certain age she would have kids with or without and when she said that I was like no way. It might change as I age. Its not my ideal picture, whether its fostering or my own biologically. I see myself married, so don't think its such an issue. The issue for me is more about finding that person in enough time that I can still have babies on my own without investing thousands of dollars in the process. That Hewlitt book scared the hell out of me, but still its like, what am I supposed to do? My mom is now all fired up, and everyone is talking about it. It's a lot of pressure in an area where I believe most women around thirty already felt a lot of pressure. On some level, we know what she is saying is true, but its not like we can just create a partner to have children with. [D3]

In addition to timing issues related to having children, participants report their pursuit of an erotic friendship is motivated by the search for a suitable father for children. Several respondents spoke about men whom they otherwise loved or who were otherwise desirable as partners, but who they knew would not be good parents. In these cases, the women chose to end the relationship to search for a more suitable partner with whom to have children.

I had a boyfriend, he was great, we were doing just fine. Then as I was watching friends have children, I started thinking, he is just not the dad type. He might do it for me, but I knew I'd have to do all the work and that doesn't work when you think about having a balanced life. And his decisions, they were just immature, or that doesn't sound fair, but I saw in the way that he made decisions that his needs always came first. Usually our needs overlapped so it wasn't that much of a problem, but I started to really analyze how he came to conclusions and decided to do things, and it just wasn't a family way. And he comes from a very loving family, maybe too loving, they made him the center of the world and I just knew in my heart, he would expect to stay there. Eventually, this became a big part of why I ended it. Not the entire reason, but I just knew he wouldn't be a good dad, and at some point that becomes one of the most important qualities. [D4]

He was so uncomfortable, children wise, he had no patience. It was really bizarre. This is a warm, intelligent, charismatic, articulate, affectionate man, who was bad with kids. And he loved his nieces and nephews but said he was sure he didn't want

to have kids. And that was the deal breaker and that was a great relationship. But we kept seeing each other even though I knew it would never work. Eventually, he asked me to move in with him. Keep in mind this is the wealthiest man I ever dated. A wonderful human being. He owns his own helicopter. I said no, moving in together is the next step to the next step and we weren't ever gonna go there, I'd never marry him. 'Cause I'm not giving that up for anybody. . . . He said he could try and I said I don't want someone who's gonna have kids for me, I want someone who wants them like I do. Everyone said, you're crazy, he wants to marry you. Because he's wealthy, people think that that's a big thing. I wasn't gonna give up kids to be with him. That's the deal breaker. [D5]

Again the issue of the cost/benefit analysis appears, and the participants' active effort to establish and reestablish what is most important: erotic friendships are desired, but not at any cost.

In their search for a suitable partner, no participant explicitly stated she was motivated by a man's wealth or earning potential. Few respondents expressed a desire to meet someone at a particular salary level, but several stated they expected that their partner would be "ambitious," just as they themselves are.

Not so much about what he should earn, but more about his motivation. I'm not gonna be attracted to someone who isn't motivated or is lazy. So typically speaking I tend to date people who are financially comfortable. I did go out with a guy who had no money, he was a bartender on the weekends, but he would get up everyday at 4 in the morning and play golf all day with a coach because he wanted to be on the PGA tour 'cause he was really good and it's extremely difficult to get on the pro golf tour. And he was dedicating everything, he gave up his job, so he could dedicate full time to playing golf, he had a coach and he ended up getting on a tour, he's not on the PGA tour, but he is on a pro golf tour. I respected this guy, he was going after what he wanted, no money. We would go to the beach to have an ice cream cone. It was a big deal with this guy, but someone had said to me oh you want to go out with guys who have a lot of money. Well, it's not necessarily true because this guy did not. It was more about who they are. But typically speaking the kind of men who are gonna be that way are gonna be somewhat successful. So, I don't have an expectation of what they make, I have an expectation of work being important to them and in most cases, that puts me with guys who are ambitious and well off, but not always. [D6]

I guess I would expect him to make the same or more. I can't expect someone to . . . how hypocritical is that, I can't say to someone I make X, you have to make X+, however, I am attracted to ambitious men. Every guy I've gone out with has been successful. I seek out the joy you get when you enjoy what you do. A passion,

working for their passion. That is what attracts me, and in the men I've dated that also equals some level of financial success. [D7]

I would expect them to make about the same or more than me. I need to have a relationship with someone who has ambition. I think a lot of times I correlate ambition with how well they do and get paid. I assume at a certain level, if you have a certain amount of ambition, no matter what you do, if you do it well, you are going to be well compensated for it. . . . I probably would not date someone who didn't meet this expectation, it's important to me that they be ambitious. I am, and it's also a matter of compatibility with what I earn and what I talk about, all that. [D8]

Though some participants spoke about wanting to find an ambitious man, it was much more typical that views about what their partner should earn were related to participants' hope to one day stay home with their children, or at least to have that be an option, should they choose to do it. In this respect, the participants are expressing not only a desire to find someone at a certain earning level, but also someone with certain child-related values.

I know I want to be home with my kids, and I would expect we'd hire out or divide other household stuff, and I would expect to keep living the life I'm living. I'm not looking for anything in particular as far as money goes, but I would hope he would want to provide for our family and have me at home if that is what I want to do. [D9]

I was with a guy who wanted to stay home, and I didn't want to be the breadwinner. In that respect, I guess I have some pretty old fashioned views. I don't want to have kids and then have someone else raise them. I think [paid work and child-rearing] are different kinds of fulfillment, one doesn't replace the other. I think I'd get bored if I didn't work. My mom is an accountant, and she was home when we were little and then went back to work part time when we were older. She was always there, and that made a huge difference. I'm not saying everyone should do it, I mean if you can't, you can't. And if I got to the point, and I was married and we couldn't afford it, I'd work. But if you can do it, I think it is really important. [D10]

I mean if I wanted to stay home with my children, I want it to be my choice and not feel that I have to go back to work. I really believe that I'd want to be home with the child for the first year or two, or at least do a job where I can enjoy them more than if I'm working 40 hours a week. I don't think I am looking for that in a man, but it certainly might be something in the back of my head. [D11]

All participants said they would like the option of staying home with children. The desire to stay home with their children implies the desire for a partner to support the family and also suggests the participants' willingness to take time and energy away from their careers and to at least temporarily end or curtail their financial independence. While the desire for a man with the financial ability to support the family is gleaned from the participants' statements, the participants' willingness to take a break from their careers and financial independence is stated rather explicitly. In fact many participants expressed a desire to distance themselves from any association as "career women" or highly successful professionals. This was somewhat surprising given the centrality of work to their current life and the joys they associate with financial independence. It is difficult to imagine these statements are predictive of future behavior, and it may be that when and if the opportunity arises, participants will find leaving the workplace easier said than done.

Alternatively, the desire for children may make them believe or wish that if it were a more immediate possibility, they would embrace it completely and stay home with their children, at least while the children were young. It may also be that after witnessing colleagues struggle to balance work and child-rearing, participants have come to the logical conclusion that rather than struggle, they would like to turn their full attention to child-rearing. Whatever the reason, participants are clear in their expression of a desire to be home with their children, to find an EF who would be supportive of that decision, and to experience the kind of fulfillment they imagine accompanies child-rearing.

Especially when I was practicing law in a big firm, I had relationships where I was [earning more]. I don't want him to be the main breadwinner either, but I wouldn't want someone who would need me to support them. For pressure reasons, and for the long term because I don't want that to be my life. . . . I want to stay home with my kids, I'm not all about the career anymore. I did that, it wasn't all that exciting. [D12]

All I know is, career is not enough. I said to my dad the other day, “if all I do is become a Deloitte partner, I will be very disappointed in myself.” I’ve done it, I’ve shown I can handle the big league, work crazy hours, keep up. But right now, I’d like a family, and kids, and to be able to not have to worry about supporting those kids, but just be able to take care of them. I don’t think I could ever totally give up work, but I’d like it to be less central, I am not ashamed to say I’d like to be taken care of for a while. I never identified as a career-woman, and most of my successful friends don’t either, we are just smart and hard-working, but we never really defined ourselves by work or how much we make. Not like men do. [D13]

The participants’ views of work, money and career are consistent with Machung’s (1989) study of college age men and women. Machung found that women defined financial independence as the ability to support themselves, whereas their male counterparts defined financial independence as the ability to support a family. The women in her study discussed work as a route to personal fulfillment, whereas men spoke about work as a way to support a family. Women in Machung’s study, unlike the men, imagined they would enter and exit the workforce as they adjusted their careers to the needs of their family. Men expected no interruptions in their work-life and had a clearer view of their work-life progression. In Machung’s words, her female respondents were “talking career, but thinking job.” Journalist Peggy Orenstein (2000) adapted this label when she described the views of work of her adult respondents (late 20s through 30s) as “talking Gloria Steinem but thinking Carol Brady” (p. 18).

In quote D10 the participant speaks about her work in terms of fulfillment and wants to take a break from work when she has children so as to experience “another kind of fulfillment.” Interestingly, all participants spoke about the desire to take time off from their careers when children came along and reported views consistent with Machung’s findings, even after actually having careers (as opposed to jobs), supporting themselves for 10 or so years, many having graduate degrees and high-powered, highly paid positions, and not currently being in an erotic friendship. At first glance, this may appear

as a sign of a lack of dedication to work. Alternatively, the expression of a desire to take time off from high-powered, highly paid and, in many cases, highly rewarding careers may be an example of reenvisioning both family and work life. Again, nothing is static for the participants, and they are increasingly open to how their preferences may change and how their options may change. They also recognize, perhaps accurately, that to have such options once in an EF requires a partner who both respects their work and earns enough to accommodate their preferences for child-rearing, whatever they may be. These qualities then become incorporated into what they hope to find in a potential partner as they age and parenting becomes a more central concern. It is not hard to imagine that at some point, these qualities will become less important and different qualities will take their place.

In speaking about work, money, and parenting, several participants stated a desire for some aspects of traditional gender roles and a traditional, gendered division of labor. They also indicated a desire for a high degree of interdependence in their erotic friendships. As discussed in the section of the costs and benefits of independence, they suspect that their current level of financial and practical independence affects their willingness and desire, and clearly their need, to be in a relationship. This leads them to question their achieved level of independence and ability to “do it all” themselves. It may be that part of their expressed desire to adopt a traditional female role reflects their belief that in having achieved their current level of success and independence, they have in some ways jeopardized their chances to have a family.

I don't know, sometimes I wonder if families don't need a little “need” to stay together. If everyone can do everything for themselves, what holds things together? Why are you staying when the sexual attraction fades and the kids are screaming? I'm not saying I want a totally traditional life, but sometimes it occurs to me I'd be a little more accommodating and a little bit less like “next” [man] please, if I felt

like I needed him to do some things, and maybe he'd be a little less jerky if they needed me. [D14]

I think we are not equal, it is not going to be equal. Men are stronger in certain areas, and women are stronger in certain areas, it doesn't mean one is stronger and one is weaker. I think its fine, things are a lot easier for me now that I am past believing things are 50/50. Men don't talk about chores or errands. And its ok, and just watching my parents, seeing what she takes care of, and what he takes care of. Seeing relationships that appear on the outside, successful, they are just content, it has a lot to do with having certain expectations of the other, but respecting the other for what they are contributing to the relationship, and knowing that you are going to contribute in your own way. For me, I look forward to contributing more in the home, it doesn't mean that I won't work or don't want to work, it just means I would expect that would be his main focus, and I could concentrate more on family. I really hope to stay home with my kids for a few years. And I would expect my husband would want the same thing. [D15]

I want more equality than my parents had, a lot more, but I hope there is a midpoint between a 50s sitcom family and house where everyone can do anything and the mom and dad are indistinguishable. This is not easy to say, but I think if people are honest, they want things a little more like their parents had them than it is popular to admit. You only want to be single and fabulous and doing it all on your own for a little while, then, a little division of responsibility, even, heaven forbid, with me in charge of the kids and him earning more, wouldn't be so bad. [D16]

These views reflect Parsons (1949) and Becker's (1981) view of the importance, even necessity of men and women having complementary and non-competing roles. Like Becker, participants recognize the importance of some "gain" to being in a relationship, and recognize that relationships may be harder to maintain when the nature of the gain is unclear. These views also reflect the issue alluded to earlier in this section presented by Hewlitt's (2002) book: that it is women's dedication to work that causes them to delay focusing on finding a partner for marriage and childbearing. The fear that their work life may interfere with their pursuit of an EF seems to lead participants to distance themselves from women who focus primarily on work at the expense of erotic friendships. In other words, they may be careful to portray themselves as women who hold certain traditional views so as to assure themselves and others that they do not value

work over marriage and children, as some might interpret their nonconventional behaviors. Participants make it clear, in fact, that not only do they value marriage and children, but they value a two-parent household.

All participants hope to find a partner for parenting and do not view solo parenting as a desirable choice. Several participants spoke of people they knew who were single parents by choice, and many spoke of women who for a variety of reasons had raised one or more children largely on their own. Still, only one participant said she was planning on having a child on her own if she was not married or in a serious relationship by the age of 35. Other respondents indicated they were not currently anticipating having a child on their own, but a common refrain was “check back with me when I’m 34 or 35.” This was said by participants in their late 20s, *and* participants who were 33. It was clearly an issue all hoped to not have to face. Three participants said they would “be okay” without children, but none expressed a desire not to have children. Participants had not completely eliminated single parenthood as an option, but no one embraced it or saw it as an equally good alternative. It was a default plan to be revisited before they were too old to have a child, but only when convinced that waiting any longer to find a partner would jeopardize their chances of having a child.

I’m sure you’ve heard this, 34, 35 seems to be a magic number. If I’m not in a relationship by then, then I’ll seriously consider it. I have no intention of not having children, and I feel confident I’ll have them one way or another. I don’t want to be an aunt to every child in my life. That is not to say I think that doing it alone is the way to go. I’m just trying to be honest and say that for me, the kids are more important and I’m not going to miss that experience just because I haven’t found the man. I mean that will be a big jump, and I definitely have mixed feelings about it, but I just know I’m going to be a mom, and I don’t know if I’m going to be a wife. [D17]

I have a friend who had a child on her own. Her experience has really affected my views, but they change every day as I observe what she does and what her challenges are. She has a child and is a great mom but she doesn’t hesitate to talk

about all the sacrifices, and how hard it is to not have someone there who is invested the way she is, and even the insecurity of not knowing who the child's father is, like with health issues and all that. She also has no time for herself, she looks like crap, exhausted and just less kept up, even though she is definitely happier since she did this. I just think your commitment level and your tolerance level for uncertainty has to be extremely high, and I imagine what happens to most people facing this is they want it, but not badly enough to really commit to the process, and then time just keeps passing. After watching my friend, I say I'll really focus on it in a couple years, but I'm almost 33 now and I just can't see doing it anytime soon, and I'm pretty close to the age when you have to get serious about it. I tried to buy a book about it the other day, but when I was in the store, looking at the titles, it felt like I was buying a book on how to deal with cancer, like it's something I may need at some point, but I just can't bring myself to face it before I absolutely have to. I can't approach this thing logically or gradually, I just keep hoping I won't have to. [D18]

Part of that experience [having children] for me would be wanting to have that child with a spouse. That is part of what I want, its part of the whole package. Is that subject to change? If I am 35 and I haven't met this person, maybe so, maybe at some point it shifts from wanting the family to wanting the children. Other women have told me that, so I have to accept that at least as a possibility, I mean a possibility that I will feel that way. [D19]

When I went in for my annual exam, the OB/GYN, a month ago, 6 weeks ago, every time I think about it or start reading about I get choked up. It's very upsetting to me. I went in and talked to her at the end of the appointment she's like is there anything you want to talk to me about. The minute I verbalized those words, the minute they were coming out of mouth, I was crying. There have been studies that have shown totally different things. There are 22 year olds who can't get pregnant and 50 year olds who get pregnant. You never know I guess in some ways we've been lulled into a false sense of security that you can have kids until you're late 30's. Definitely I hear the clock ticking. So I asked her, I'm sure she thinks I'm the craziest person 'cause I'm like what can I do, are there certain foods I can eat, exercises I can do. She was cracking up, she was like, no. She's like you can have your eggs frozen which costs a fortune, \$15,000 plus \$100 a month to rent freezer space. Just think how things in your freezer get freezer burn you want that to your eggs? It's also a process, you have to go through everything you go through for in-vitro. You have to have the shots and the hormones and they harvest the eggs. It's not just like done, it's a big deal, a big commitment. It's something I'm thinking about a lot these days. [D20]

I used to think it was unfair to have a baby knowing there would not be a father figure there . . . but that doesn't insure anything anymore. It really doesn't, you have people with mom and dad fighting all the time. With single moms, sometimes they have grandparents. I think it's more about support. I don't think that just because you don't have that combination of mom and dad that your kid is going to end up screwed up. As I get older, my feelings on the subject are changing, maybe I'm

getting myself used to what may be my only option if I want kids. It's hard to think about. I'm kind of pushing those thoughts off til my mid-30s, then I guess I'll have to really face it and make some decisions. [D21]

I think that if I'm single and don't have children maybe by age 35, then I would more seriously consider doing that. I think my biological clock will be really loud. I held a baby last Friday night. People around the table heard it. It's things like that. People at the table definitely heard the tick tock clicking. I think by the time I'm 35, I guess that would be my magic age if I was gonna choose an age of really considering a sperm donor [D22]

I have already decided that if I am not married, involved in what I would assess is leading toward that, then when I'm 34 I'll begin the process of adoption or insemination. That is a boundary that has dissipated. Maybe it will change, maybe happen earlier or later. I'm open to it. Though I definitely view it as less . . . I don't want to say "less desirable" because I don't want to speak in those terms about a child, but I certainly think it would be better and easier if by that point I have someone in my life. I'm just certain that one way or another I will have a child. [D23]

Despite being a default plan, participants are wrestling with the idea of single parenthood, just as they wrestle with ideas about dependence and interdependence. Perhaps this is the strongest testament to the relevance of new action principles and self-reflexivity for these participants. As their life changes, as they assess and reassess what their likely options are for having meaningful relationships in their life, they are ultimately revisiting their definition of erotic friendships and family. Participants recognize they need to envision many aspects of their life, particularly parenthood; for if they do not, they may reach a time when it becomes considerably more difficult to reconsider their decision. In participants' views, this time comes somewhere around age 35. But like other aspects of EFs and family life they struggle with, it is likely that this will change as they age, gain more experience, learn more about what is possible, and continue to wrestle with what is most important in their efforts to experience meaningful relationships. As in quote D17,

I'm just trying to be honest and say that for me, the kids are more important and I'm not going to miss that experience just because I haven't found the man. I mean that will be a big jump, and I definitely have mixed feelings about it, but I just know I'm going to be a mom, and I don't know if I'm going to be a wife.

The evolution of this view, that even the focus of their meaningful relationships could switch from man to child, is both part of their struggle and part of their success in embracing the adaptive process which is their current life. In their efforts to reconcile their nonconventional behavior and their conventional impulses, participants are gradually expanding their views to incorporate the realities of their lives; their varied values, preferences, and needs; and their expanding view of what they themselves are capable of—the various ways in which their environment and their own sense of agency both constrain and enable them.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS

Women's sexual behavior and relationships with men in previous generations were shaped largely by clearly identified needs and societal norms and values: women's limited opportunities in the workplace and accompanying financial dependence on men, women's need to find a marital partner to insure financial security, and strong societal norms discouraging nonmarital sex for women. These needs, values, and norms are now less relevant for many women, as is evidenced by other research noting considerable change in women's sexual and relationship behavior.

While researchers have documented women's behavioral changes, there is little sociological research documenting how such behavioral changes have changed women's experience with "erotic friendships" (EFs). In this study, in-depth interviews were used to identify and explore the views of, and experiences with, erotic friendships of 25 heterosexual, college-educated, economically-secure, single women between the ages of 28 and 35. The size of the sample, method of recruitment, and exploratory nature of the study obviously limit the generalizability of the findings and bias the results toward homogeneity. However, the results and analysis do contribute to our understanding of the challenges, opportunities, behaviors, and choices facing economically-secure, single women in their pursuit of erotic friendships.

While scripting theory and structural functionalism were helpful in explaining women's sexual behavior and relationships with men in previous generations, the data

suggest that new action theories, particularly the work of Anthony Giddens, are now more relevant and illuminating. New action theories address the innovations and struggles people experience as they try to develop and maintain relationships that meet their needs. According to new action theories, people are not simply reproducing relationships according to societal scripts, norms, and expectations but rather are actively producing or constructing their families and relationships in an environment that both constrains and enables them.

Three themes emerge from the data: (a) participants are actively working to reconcile their modern world and its opportunities and possibilities with lingering traditional values and social pressures; (b) this effort takes place in an environment that is undergoing constant change as opportunities present themselves or appear to become shut off, and as participants age and integrate new experiences and information; and (c) participants continue to search for an erotic friendship while simultaneously exploring new ways to meet their emotional and practical needs.

Respondents report that their views of and experiences with erotic friendships are characterized by a constant process of self and environmental analysis, what Giddens calls “self-reflexivity.” Participants exhibit through their words and behaviors their ongoing interaction with societal structures. The meanings and impact of those structures is changed through their behavior and their willingness to comply with what they perceive as societal expectations. In other words, participants are aware both of the continued effects of social norms and structures and their agency to reject, accept, or adapt to such external influences—the various ways in which their environment both constrains and enables them. Participants also reveal through their actions and words how

these structures and norms are changing as they change, act, age, and to paraphrase one respondent, “remain open to what is possible, and what is becoming possible.”

In conclusion, the participants views of, and experiences with, erotic friendships are characterized by the following:

- Participants engage in a constant weighing of the perceived benefits of erotic friendships, and marriage in particular, which include being a priority in someone's life and practical assistance with daily living, as compared to the costs of losing much of their independence and the lifestyle they have created for themselves as single women.
- Participants are experiencing a new way for large numbers of women to live. The participants recognize they are pioneers. While this new way of life affords many opportunities, it also requires ongoing effort and attention to their personal lives, as there are few relevant role models or guidelines for them to follow. Sometimes this effort is perceived as a benefit of “freedom” and “having so many options”; other times the effort is perceived as a lot of struggle for uncertain outcomes and perhaps not an improvement over times when women's options were more limited.
- If women's lives were previously akin to following a scripted play, participants' lives are now more similar to an improvisational theater performance. Their lives are unscripted (though informed by a multitude of scripts from parents, the media, and religion) and exciting, with possibilities for failure and disappointment as well as the opportunity to create something new, fulfilling, and tailored to their wants and preferences.
- Participants hope to find a partner to join their improvisational performance, but this partner will have to have certain skills that participants have difficulty conceptualizing and articulating. These skills include a willingness to adapt and change as needs and opportunities change, and to have flexible roles within the relationship. They want an erotic friend who recognizes the current environment and the opportunities it presents require that both parties negotiate fairly, remain open to new possibilities, and be willing to adjust, adapt and innovate, just as the participants have done during their adult years as single women. Participants suggest that a partner's ability and willingness to provide a high level of practical support, much higher than was expected of men in previous generations, is a key to their ability to develop and maintain a satisfying EF while also retaining some of the aspects of their current life that they value. Since participants do not have a commonly-understood language to describe their requirements, or perhaps a clear conceptualization of them, participants at times sound doubtful of their ability to find and maintain the kind of erotic friendship they desire.
- Participants do not “need” a relationship for the reasons women did in the past. Since they remain open to discovering new ways to meet their desires and

preferences for companionship, support, and in some cases children, remaining single is a preferable choice to settling for something less than the type of relationship described in No. 4 above. Though they all *state* they want to marry, their *willingness* to remain single is demonstrated through their words and actions.

- The difficulty in finding participants for this study, as well as some of the participants' responses, suggests a stigma remains to being an adult single woman. While a few potential participants were deterred by time or logistical considerations, several others did not want to be identified by their single status and found the idea of speaking about "it" to a stranger repugnant. Participants spoke of this stigma as well, but also their ways of managing it, and in many cases, rejecting it.
- Traditional ideas of dating, marriage, and family continue to shape participants' stated *hopes* for future relationships and family life, even if their *expectations* are adapting to their more nonconventional experiences. While participants continue to express traditional preferences, they are at the same time aware of the challenges and drawbacks to traditional behaviors and roles and the ways in which their own needs and preferences sometimes run counter to them. Participants have difficulty envisioning equally valid dating, family, and relationship models; however, they are beginning to create such models. These models are tailored to their own preferences but informed by social structures. Participants continue to develop these models as they recognize how challenging it is to develop and maintain erotic friendships consistent with their seemingly inconsistent set of values, wants and preferences: they are actively working to make it "all fit together."

Implications and Avenues for Future Research

This project suggests a new, and in many ways desirable, model for how large numbers of women can now live as adults. Though a deficit-comparison model to traditional family life still exists, it is both financially and socially possible for large numbers of women to live on their own and to develop EFs based on their own preferences and needs, rather than on financial needs or social mandates. This "new" lifestyle option has many societal, economic, and individual-level implications:

- A continuation of women's delayed age at first marriage and perhaps an erosion in the percentage of women ever marrying (though current forecasts suggest women will continue to marry at previous rates for the near future) (Goldstein & Kenney, 2001).

- Continuation of the trend toward delayed child-bearing (Hewlitt, 2002) and increased attention and resources focused on technological advances to prolong women's child-bearing years.
- Increased efforts to understand and market to adult, single, economically-secure women. (For example, Home Depot recently began an effort to make their stores less like warehouses and more like design showrooms, which would be more appealing to women. A sales person suggested this effort is part of their recognition of more female do-it-yourself homeowners.) Other industries—such as real estate, financial planning, and insurance—traditionally thought to cater to male heads-of-households will increasingly tailor their marketing efforts to the needs of single, adult women.
- Increase in popular media offerings highlighting the joys and challenges of single adult life, and models of women's nonconventional career and relationship choices.
- Increased sense of malaise among adult women as they discover what participants have discovered: with more choices, comes more responsibility and the need for more attention to their experiences with erotic friendships. As one of the participant's suggested, she successfully navigated graduate school and the business world, and now finds her biggest challenge is in finding a relationship—she had always assumed that would be the easy part. In this sense, malaise may not be a negative feeling, but rather a sense of disease due to the need for attention, adaptation, and struggle, as compared to the relative ease of assuming one would automatically find a suitable EF.
- As the malaise described above becomes more prevalent, the pharmaceutical, self-help and therapeutic industries may hope to capitalize on such feelings by “medicalizing” or “problematizing” the sense of struggle related to making nonconventional life choices.
- Increasing visibility of alternative ways to meet emotional and practical needs, and for child-bearing and rearing. These alternatives may include, as two women on my street have done, “partnering” in a non-erotic relationship. They have joined forces to increase their standard of living and to provide ongoing companionship and support, but do not consider themselves lesbians, and do not have a sexual relationship.
- Increasing popularity of and demand for alternatives to conventional housing, such as those proposed by New Everyday Life (Scanzoni, in press) and New Urbansim (Kunstler, 1993, 1996), two movements that promote development of neighborhoods and living spaces that foster community and connectedness between residents. Currently, two thriving cohousing communities are located within 10 minutes of my home.
- Perhaps most significantly, the increasing visibility of adult single women living on their own, and/or partnering after many years as a single adult, suggests men may

need to reevaluate what makes them desirable partners. While many traditional aspects of male attractiveness remain, the interest and ability to provide a high level of practical support, and to be able to negotiate work and family roles fairly and to address ever-changing needs, will likely become increasingly important components of adult male attractiveness and their ability to maintain EFs with women.

While these implications suggest many avenues for future research, two populations initially seemed to provide a comparison and perhaps a model for how women adapt to nonconventional EFs and family life. First, many African-American women experience some of the same relationship issues as this project's largely Caucasian sample, such as a perception of scarcity of desirable men, longer times spent single, and personal financial independence. Second, women in Sweden currently experience a more flexible definition of family and gender roles and improved opportunities in the workplace, both of which have dramatically changed the nature of their erotic friendships and family life. In both cases, however, certain social factors make them incomparable to the population studied here.

Unlike many black women, the women in the study grew up seeing and believing in the likelihood of their being married, and many had mothers who were financially supported by their fathers. Most of the participants shaped their career paths around goals of personal fulfillment, rather than the expectation of needing to support themselves financially. This is less true in the African-American community, where views of the need for financial independence are more often shaped by historical factors related to employment opportunities available for men, the availability of economically-successful men, and role models in their own community (Heiss, 1988; Staples, 1981). Similarly, working-class families may not be comparable, despite facing many of the same challenges of work and family balance, and role distribution. Such individuals face these

challenges with fewer economic resources and perhaps having grown up with different messages, pressures, and expectations from friends and family. Perhaps most significantly, societal structures and cultural mediators pushed the women in the study toward a traditional family life and the dating and sexual behaviors that were believed to help them achieve such a traditional family life. The women in the study are behaving in ways unexpected by their parents, and their behaviors are not perceived to be based on “survival” and demographic realities but rather on choice or luck—or perhaps more accurately, perceived bad choices or bad luck.

Unlike Swedish women, the women in the sample do not receive the same level of social support for their commitment to work or to more flexible family roles and arrangements. Swedes have a much longer tradition of cohabitation and attach much less social significance to marriage (Glendon, 1989). Also, the Swedish government has developed a clearly stated goal and plan for achieving workplace equality in the near future (Ministry for Industry and Employment Communications, 1999). This plan has led to a high level of social and practical support to help women and men balance work and family, such as state supported child-care. The availability of such programs further challenges the importance of traditional family roles and the importance of marriage itself. Given the importance participants attach to societal and their own views of marriage (even if their behavior is nonconforming), as well as their focus on receiving practical support from their EF, it seems the Swedish experience is not comparable to that of the participants.

I suspect the group about whom studies would be most useful in further clarifying women’s views and experiences with EFs, is what Scanzoni et al (1989) refer to as maintenance/change couples. High-achieving maintenance/change couples are currently

engaged in the kinds of negotiation anticipated by participants. These couples show through example how people are doing in developing—likely without many role models or much social support—the new skills required for relationships between people who want to find balance between work, family, and personal interests and pursuits. As suggested by participants, their observations of such couples is strongly influential of their views of and expectations for their own erotic friendships.

Another area of future research suggested by participants' responses is why single parenting remains the "final frontier," the one area these independent-minded and highly accomplished women hesitate to confront. If they have done other things they never thought they would do outside of marriage (travel, purchasing a home, planning for retirement), why is it that parenting—something they unanimously state they want to do—remains an issue they hope to avoid until what they perceive of as the final hours in which to make a decision? Also, given participants' hesitation to give up much of their independence for a man, why do they still hold on to the goal of parenting, when a child will certainly impinge on their freedoms and independence more than an EF? Participants' responses beg these questions, but unfortunately these issues were not explored in this study.

Final Thoughts

I struggle with labeling the participants "nonconventional," but cannot think of a better way to describe them. In retrospect, the concept of "choice" becomes important (though it was not a significant theme in the interviews). More specifically, is being single and 30 a "choice" made by nonconventional women who did not want relationships to get in the way of their other pursuits, or did these women "just not meet the right person early on, and one day woke up and found that they were 30"? In other

words, are the women in the study nonconventional by definition of their behavior—not having partnered or married—or are they nonconventional in the way artists, actors, astronauts, and activists might be, people who are drawn to a lifestyle that does not easily accommodate traditional family life?

I believe the participants would say they are conventional women with conventional preferences who happen to have “ended up” being in a group they would not have chosen to join, but they now see the many benefits of—and are equally able to see the drawbacks of the more traditional path not taken. Yet, do their choices, in fact, make them nonconventional—and could it be argued that many of the paths we take in life reflect something about our character and are not simply “luck”?

I am challenged by this question as I see myself just as likely to have led this nonconventional lifestyle had I not met my partner in my early 20s. These women may be nonconventional “pioneers” by virtue of their status as high-achieving single women in the first generation where this “new” lifestyle option is a possibility for large numbers of women. However, they are not nonconventional in the way of Susan B. Anthony or Gloria Steinem, two women who consciously rejected a traditional lifestyle so as to pursue a non-conventional lifestyle unburdened by traditional family roles and relationships. Rather, these women are, perhaps, reluctant pioneers, women who demonstrate by example a new way for women to live and who highlight through contrast the benefits and drawbacks of partnered and single life. They are not activists against the traditional family model, and they have no other model to suggest as equally desirable. Rather, as suggested by Giddens (1984) and the participants’ responses and actions, participants are improvisational actors acting in an environment that allows more

freedom of choice but also requires actors to more consciously work to create the relationships that meet their personal needs, wants, and preferences.

The most interesting issue may be the degree to which the participants' stated conventional desires reflect their own true preferences, or alternatively, the values of a societal context with its own contradictions. Their social context encourages independent accomplishment in women, as long as they eventually adopt a more traditional family role. Given such pressures and contradictory messages, it is difficult to know whether participants' stated conventional desires represent their true wants and preferences or the difficulty of fully embracing the less conventional lifestyle they have "chosen," and continue to choose each day. The answer is likely, as Giddens might suggest, that their wants and preferences are inextricable from the social environment in which they are formed.

APPENDIX A INTERVIEW GUIDE

BACKGROUND

1. Age
2. Education- highest level achieved, currently enrolled in a degree program
3. Religion
4. Income Category (under 50; 50-100; 100-150; over 150)
5. Region of country raised in

MESSAGES GROWING UP

First I'd like to talk about the messages you received about sex and sexuality while you were growing up.

6. What did your parent or parents teach you about sex and sexuality?
 - a. (if 2 parents) Did both parents teach the same thing?
 - b. Did any of the messages change as you got older?
7. How about your friends growing up, what did you learn from them about sex?
8. Did your religion affect your views about sexuality as you were growing up?
9. How about the media—tv, movies, books—what did they teach you about sex as you were growing up?
 - a. Do any images from books, tv shows, movies stand out as having a major impact on you? (phrased differently) Can you give me an image that stayed with you? Explain.

CURRENT MESSAGES

Now let's talk about the present.

10. How about your friends now—do you discuss sex with your friends?
 - a. Do they affect your views about sexuality or your sexual behaviors in any ways?
11. Do you follow the same religion you did when growing up?
12. Does your (current) religion affect your views of sexuality now that you are an adult?
13. How about your parents, do they affect your views or behaviors?
14. Are there any characters on tv, or in books or movies that you relate to? Some examples might be one of the characters on Ally McBeal, Bridget Jones, a soap opera or Sex and the City, or any character you can think of?
 - a. Why do you relate to them?
 - b. Does it have any effect on you to see or read about these characters?
15. Can you think of any other media images that affect how you feel about your sexuality?

16. Where do you get most of your information about sex and sexuality—Oprah, an author or columnist, books, clinical sources (journals, newsletters), physician, the internet, magazines, an organization, friends or family member?
 - a. Is there a source that has had a particular impact?
17. Have your views about sexuality changed as you've aged and/or gained more sexual experience?
 - a. Did your education, job, a partner, or something else change your views?

WORK and MONEY

18. Describe what you do for a living.
19. How fulfilling do you find your work?
 - a. Explain what you find fulfilling or unfulfilling about it.
20. Do you feel you are appropriately compensated for what you do?
21. Are you able to live comfortably on the money you earn or have?
22. Do your responsibilities at work affect the time energy you feel you have for a romantic relationship?

Now I'd like to ask you about what you'd expect financially from a person you'd be in a relationship with.

23. Do you have any financial expectations of a man you'd be in a relationship with, any particular feelings about what he should earn?
 - a. Is it important that he earn more, less or approximately the same as you?
 - b. Would you enter a relationship with someone who didn't meet your expectations in this area?
 - c. What about once in a relationship, if your partner didn't meet your financial expectations, how do you think it would affect the relationship?

EMOTIONAL FULFILLMENT

24. How important to you is emotional intimacy with a romantic partner, that is, you can talk about anything, share very personal matters, fears, hopes, etc/expect them to do same/ feel secure being emotionally vulnerable?
25. Would you leave a romantic relationship if you didn't feel you were emotionally intimate?
26. Do you have any relationships, with friends, family, colleagues, or someone else, that you would describe as emotionally intimate?
27. Do those relationships meet your needs for emotional intimacy?
28. Do you think the emotional intimacy you get with a romantic partner is different from the emotional intimacy you can get from other relationships?
 - a. In what ways is it different?

VIEWS OF RELATIONSHIPS

29. Describe what you hope to find in a relationship.
 - a. Tell me some of the qualities of the person, and of the relationship.
30. From your own relationships, and observing those of others, have you drawn any general conclusions about male/female relationships?
31. Do you think there is anything that you could (not necessarily would, but could) change about yourself, or your expectations for a relationship, that would make your relationships with men easier or better?

32. Generally speaking, do you feel that the men you have had relationships with lack a particular quality, or view, or understanding, which has affected your relationships with them?
33. Have your expectations of what you want from a relationship changed as you aged and/or gained more sexual or relationship experience?
34. Do you think women make sacrifices to be in romantic relationships?
35. Do men make sacrifices?
36. Other than sexual activity, what do you think distinguishes a romantic relationship from other kinds of relationships?
 - a. If you had to boil it down to its most basic elements, what makes a romantic relationship different from other relationships that are also important to you?

BEHAVIOR

37. If you found someone attractive at a party, would you initiate a conversation?
 - a. Would you ask them out?
 - b. Have you ever done that?
38. Is meeting men difficult for you?
 - a. If it is difficult, what would make meeting men easier for you?
 - b. If it isn't difficult, why do you think it is easy for you to meet men?
39. What guides your behavior with men in encounters--the degree to which you are attracted to him, religious beliefs, what your friends would think or something else?

HEALTH

40. Are HIV/AIDS or other STDs a serious concern for you?
 - a. Do you discuss HIV/AIDS or STDs with potential sexual partners?
 - b. Have these issues affected your sexual behavior in any ways?

MARRIAGE AND MOTHERHOOD

41. Do you imagine that you will get married one day?
42. What are you looking for in a marital partner?
43. Do you regularly meet men who have these qualities?
44. What are the most important qualities, the ones you wouldn't compromise on, for a marital partner?
45. Are there any things you are waiting to do or get until you get married, such as buying a house, a new car, taking a trip?
46. Were there any things that you've done, that you thought you wouldn't do until you got married, such as taking a trip, buying a house?
 - a. How did it feel to do those things?
 - b. Did it change your view of marriage or what you were looking for in a romantic partner?
47. Do you want to have children?
 - a. How strong is your desire to have children?
48. Does your desire for children affect how you interact with, or how you pursue men you are attracted to?

49. Generally speaking, how do you feel about the idea of women having children on their own?
 - a. Is this something you would consider for yourself?
 - b. If yes, does this willingness to have a child on your own affect your relationships, or your pursuit of relationships, in any way you can think of?

SEXUAL REVOLUTION/FEMINISM/HOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED

50. In the 1960s and 1970s, there was what has been called a "sexual revolution." What does that term, sexual revolution mean to you, and what, if anything, do you think its effects were?
51. Do you think things are different for you as an adult single woman, than they were for single women of your mother's generation?
 - a. Do you think the changes represent an improvement in women's lives or a worsening of conditions for women?

Generally speaking, prior to the 1960s, women's approach to their sexuality and their sexual behavior was shaped by societal views that discouraged women from having sex outside of marriage and the need for women to find a husband to insure she'd be financially secure. Women worried that being too active or expressing too much interest in sexual activity would damage their reputation, and make them less likely to find a good husband.

52. Do you think any of those pressures are still present or relevant today?
53. Prior to the 1960's, women's behavior was largely shaped and motivated by this need to preserve their reputation, and to find a good husband to support them. Some argue these factors are less relevant for women, or at least some women, now. Generally speaking, what do you think motivates and shapes women's behavior and pursuit of relationships today?
54. How about for you specifically--what values or expectations would you say shape or motivate your sexual behavior or pursuit of romantic relationships?

APPENDIX B
STUDY SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Race (by sight)	Caucasian	African-American	Asian		
	22	1	2		
Religion	Protestant	Catholic	Atheist	Jewish	Hindu
	12	3	1	8	1
Income	Under 50	50-100	100-150	over 150	
	3	18	3	1	
Education	Bachelor's	Master's	Law	PhD	
	12	6	5	2	
Region	Northeast	Southeast	West	Midwest	
	9	12	2	2	

REFERENCES

- Abrahamson, M. (1983). *Social research methods*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Alexander, J. (1988). *Action and its environments: Toward a new synthesis*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Astin A. W., Parrott, S. A., Korn, W. S., & Sax, L. J. (1997). *American freshman: Thirty year trends*. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California.
- Anderson, C., Stewart, S., & Dimidjian, S. (1994). *Flying solo: Single women in midlife*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Becker, G. S. (1973). A theory of marriage. Part I. *Journal of Political Economy*, 81, 813-846.
- Becker, G. S. (1974). A theory of marriage. Part II: Marriage, family, human capital and fertility. *Journal of Political Economy*, 82(Supp.), S11-S26.
- Becker, G. S. (1981). *A treatise on the family*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Berg, B. L. (1989). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Berger, P. L., & Luckman, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Bernardes, J. (1993). Responsibilities in studying postmodern families. *Journal of Family Issues*, 14, 35-49.
- Berrill, N. J. (1954). *Sex and the nature of things*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Co.
- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bologh, R. W. (1990). *Love or greatness: Max Weber and masculine thinking—A feminist enquiry*. Boston: Unwin Hayman.

- Bryson, K. (1996a, October). *Current population report: Household and family characteristics: March 1995*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.
- Bryson, K. (1996b, November 26). *Family composition changing, Census report shows* [Press release]. Retrieved September 1, 2003, from www.census.gov/Press-Release/cb96-195.html
- Bumpass, L. L., & Sweet, J. A. (1989). National estimates of cohabitation. *Demography*, 26, 615-25.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics. (1998, October). *Current population survey: College enrollment and work activity of 1998 high school graduates* [Supplement]. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2002, May). *Highlights of women's earnings in 2001* (Report No. 960). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor.
- Burns, K., & Barns, P. (Producers). (2003, May 21). *Not For Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony* [Television broadcast]. Washington, DC: Public Broadcasting System, WETA.
- Castro, T. M., & Bumpass, L. L. (1989). Recent trends in marital disruption. *Demography* 26, 37-51.
- Christenson, H. T. (1964). Development of the family field of study. In H. T. Christenson (Ed.), *Handbook of marriage and the family* (pp. 3-32). Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Cooley, C. H. (1902). *Human nature and the social order*. New York: Scribner
- Cooley, C. H. (1909). *Social organization*. New York: Scribner.
- Cott, N. (1978). Passionlessness: An interpretation of Victorian sexual ideology. *Signs*, 4, 219-236.
- Daly, M. 1973. *Beyond God the Father*. Boston, MA: Beacon.
- D'Emilio, J. & Freedman, E. (1988). *Intimate matters: A history of sexuality in America*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Dewey, J. (1930). *Human nature and conduct*. New York: Modern Library.
- Dizard, J. E., & Gadlin, H. G. (1990). *The minimal family*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Dilonardo, M. J. (2002, June). For a good time call...." *Atlanta Magazine*, 74-75.

- Durkheim, E. (1964). *The division of labor in society* (G. Simpson, Trans.). New York: Free Press. (Original work published 1933).
- Day, J. C., & Curry, A. E. (1998). *Educational attainment in the United States: March 1998* [updated]. Washington, DC: US Bureau of the Census.
- Eisenstein, Z. (1986). *The radical future of liberal feminism*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Ellis, H. (1926). *Studies in the psychology of sex* (3rd ed.). Philadelphia: F.A. Davis.
- Faris, E. (1957). The primary group: Essence and accident. In L.A. Coser & B. Rosenberg (Eds.), *Sociology theory* (pp. 298-303). NY: Macmillan. (Original work published in 1937)
- Fein, E., & Schneider, S. (1995). *The rules: Time-tested secrets for capturing the heart of Mr. Right*. New York: Warner.
- Fillion, K. (1996, February). This is the sexual revolution" (Young women and sex in the 1990s). *Saturday Night*, 36-41.
- Friedan, B. (1963). *The feminine mystique*. New York: Norton.
- Friedan, B. (1981). *The second stage*. New York: Summit.
- Freud, S. (1962). *Three essays on the theory of sexuality*. (J. Strachey, Trans.). New York: Basic. (Original work published 1931)
- Fullerton, H. N. (1999, November). Labor force projections to 2008: Steady growth and changing composition. *Monthly Labor Review*, 19-32.
- Furstenberg, F. (1999). Children and family change: Discourse between social scientists and the media. *Contemporary Sociology*, 28, 10-17.
- Gadlin, H. (1977). Private lives and public order: A critical view of the history of intimate relations in the United States. In G. Levinger & H. Raush (Eds.), *Close relationships: Perspectives on the meaning of intimacy* (pp. 33-72). Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Gagnon, J. H., & Simon, W. (1973). *Sexual conduct: The social sources of human sexuality*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Ganong, L. H., Coleman, M., & Mapes, D. (1990). A meta-analytic review of family structure stereotypes. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 52, 287-297.
- Giddens, A. (1976). *New rules of sociological method: A positive critique of interpretive sociologies*. New York: Basic Books.

- Giddens, A. (1979). *Central problems in social theory: Action, structure and contradiction in social analysis*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Giddens, A. (1982). *Profiles and critiques in social theory*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of constructionism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Giddens, A. (1990). *The consequences of modernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Goldstein, J. R., & Kenney, C. T. (2001). Marriage delayed or marriage foregone? New cohort forecasts of first marriage for U.S. women. *American Sociological Review*, 66, 506-519.
- Glassner, B. (2000). Where meanings get constructed. *Contemporary Sociology*, 29, 590-594.
- Glendon, M. A. (1989). *The transformation of family law: State, law, and family in the United States and western Europe*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gravenhorst, L. (1988). A feminist look at family development theory. In D. Klein & J. Aldous (Eds.), *Social stress and family development* (pp. 79-101). New York: Guildford.
- Hayge, H. V. (1997, September). Developments in women's labor force participation. *Monthly Labor Review*, 41-46.
- Heiss, J. (1988). Women's values regarding marriage and the family. In H. P. McAdoo (Ed.), *Black families* (pp. 201-214). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Herd, G., & Stoller, R. (1990). *Intimate communications: Erotics and the study of culture*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Herz, D. E., & Wooten, B. (1996). Women in the workforce: An overview. In C. Costello & B. K. Krimgold (Eds.), *The American woman 1996-1997: Women and work* (pp. 44-78). New York: Norton.
- Hewlitt, S. A. (2002). *Creating a life: Professional women and the quest for children*. New York: Talk Miramax.
- Hite, S. (1987). *Women and love: A cultural revolution in progress*. New York: Knopf.
- Holsti, O. R. (1968). Content analysis. In G. Lindzey & E. Aaronson (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Hooks, B. (1984). *Feminist theory from margin to center*. Boston: South End Press.

- Israel, B. (2002). *Bachelor girl: The secret history of single women in the twentieth century*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Janus, S. S., & Janus, C. L. (1993). *The Janus report on sexual behavior*. New York: Wiley.
- Kamen, P. (2000). *Her way: Young women remake the sexual revolution*. New York: New York University Press.
- Kiefer, O. (1953). *Sexual life in ancient Rome*. New York: Barnes and Noble.
- Kinsey, A. C., Pomeroy, W. B., Martin, C. E., & Gebhard, P. (1953). *Sexual behavior in the human female*. Philadelphia: Saunders.
- Kuhn, M. (1955). How mates are sorted. In H. Becker & R. Hill (Eds.), *Family, marriage, and parenthood* (pp. 246-275). Boston: DC Heath.
- Kunstler, J. H. (1993). *The geography of nowhere: The rise and decline of America's man-made landscape*. New York: Touchstone/Simon & Schuster.
- Kunstler, J. H. (1996). *Home from nowhere: Remaking our everyday world for the twenty-first century*. New York: Touchstone/Simon & Schuster.
- Laumann, E. O., Gagnon, J. H., Michael, R. T., & Michaels, S. (1994). *The social organization of sexuality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Levine, D. N., Carter, E.B., & Miller, E. (1976). Simmel's influence on American sociology. *American Journal of Sociology*, 81, 813-845.
- Levine, S. B. (2003). Parenting: A new social contract. In R. Morgan (Ed.), *Sisterhood is forever* (pp. 85-93). New York: Washington Square Press.
- Levinson, D. J., & Levinson, J. D. (1996). *The seasons of a woman's life*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Lewis, K. G. (1994). Heterosexual women through the life cycle. In M. Mirkin (Ed.), *Women context: Toward a feminist reconstruction of psychotherapy* (pp. 170-187). New York: Guilford.
- Licht, H. (1953). *Sexual life in ancient Greece*. New York: Barnes and Noble.
- Long-Laws, J., & Schwartz, P. (1977). *Sexual scripts: The social construction of female sexuality*. Hinsdale, IL: Dryden.
- Lottes, I. (1993). Nontraditional gender roles and the sexual experiences of heterosexual college students. *Sex Roles*, 29(9/10), 645-669.

- Lowenstein, S. F., Bloch, N. E., Campion, J. Epstein, J. S., Gale, P., & Salvatore, M. (1981). A study of satisfactions and stresses of single women in midlife. *Sex Roles*, 7(11), 1127-1141.
- Machung, A. (1989). Talking career, thinking job: Gender differences in career and family expectations of Berkeley seniors. *Feminist Studies*, 15(1), 35-58.
- MacKinnon, C. (1989). *Toward a feminist theory of the state*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- MaHood, J., & Wenburg, K. (Eds.) (1980). *The Mosher survey: Sexual attitudes of forty-five victorian women*. New York: Arno Press.
- Maines, D. R. (2000). The social construction of meaning. *Contemporary Sociology* 29, 577-584.
- McIntyre, J. (1966). The structural-functional approach to family study. In F. I. Nye (Ed.), *Emerging conceptual frameworks in family analysis* (pp. 52-77). New York: Macmillan.
- Mead, G. H. (1934) *Mind, self, and society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mead, G. H. (1938). *The philosophy of the act*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Merton, R. K. (1957). *Social theory and social structure*. New York: Free Press.
- Ministry for Industry and Employment Communications. (1999). *Swedish government policy on gender equality: Into the twenty-first century* [Article N 2000.009]. Stockholm, Sweden: Author.
- Modell, J. (1989). *Into one's own: From youth to adulthood in the U.S. 1920-1975*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Morgan, R. (2003). Introduction: New world women. In R. Morgan (Ed.), *Sisterhood is forever* (pp. xv-iv). New York: Washington Square Press.
- Muehlenhard, C., & McCoy, M. L. (1991). Double standard/double bind: The sexual double standard and women's communication about sex. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 15, 447-461.
- Nadelson, C., & Notman, M. T. (1981). To marry or not to marry: A choice. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 138, 1352-1356.
- Nagourney, E. (2000, February 15). Study finds families bypassing marriage. *New York Times*, p. D8.

- National Center for Health Statistics. (1996). *Marriage and divorce. Vital Statistics of the United States* (Vol. 3). Washington, DC: Public Health Service
- National Marriage Project. (2000). *The state of our unions, 2000*. New Brunswick, NJ: Author.
- Oppenheimer, V. K., & Lew, V. (1995). American marriage formation in the 1980s: How important was women's economic independence? In K. O. Mason & A. Jensen (Eds.), *Gender and family change in industrialized countries* (pp. 105-138). Oxford, England: Clarendon.
- Orenstein, P. (2000). *Flux: Women on sex, work, love, kids, and life in a half-changed world*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Otto, H. A.. (1970). The new marriage: Marriage as a framework for developing personal potential. In H. A. Otto (Ed.), *The family in search of a future* (pp. 111-118). Norwalk, CT: Appleton-Century-Crofts.
- Ortner, S. B., & Whitehead, H. (1981). *Sexual meanings: The cultural construction of gender and sexuality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Sullivan, L. F., & Byers, E. S. (1992). College students incorporation of initiator and restrictor roles in sexual dating interactions. *Journal of Sex Research*, 29(9), 435-46.
- Parks, R. (1915). *Principles of human behavior*. Chicago: Zalaz.
- Parsons, T. (1949). *Essays in sociological theory, pure and applied*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Parsons, T. (1955). The American family: Its relations to personality and to social structure. In T. Parsons & R.F. Bales (Eds.), *Family socialization and interaction process* (pp. 3-33). New York. The Free Press.
- Peterson, N. L. (1982). *The ever single woman: Life without marriage*. New York: Quill.
- Pleck, E. H., & Pleck, J. H. 1980. *The American man*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Popenoe, D. (1996). Modern marriage: Revising the cultural script. In J. B. Elshtain & D. Blankenhorn (Eds.), *Promises to keep: Decline and renewal in marriage in America* (pp. 247-170). Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Reiss, I. (1960). *Premarital sexual standards in America*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press.
- Reiss, I. (1986). *Journey into sexuality: An exploratory voyage*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

- Reiss, I. (1990). *An end to shame: Shaping our next sexual revolution*. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus
- Rice, J. K. (1994). Reconsidering research on divorce, family life cycle, and the meaning of family. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 18, 559-584.
- Roper Starch Worldwide Inc. (2000, February). *Virginia Slims opinion poll 2000: Voices of women* (8th ed.). New York: Philip Morris USA.
- Rothman, E. K. (1984). *Hands and hearts: A history of courtship in America*. New York: Basic Books.
- Rotundo, E. A. (1987). Learning about manhood: Gender ideals and the middle class family in nineteenth century America. In J. A. Mangan & J. Walvin (Eds.), *Manliness and morality* (pp. 35-48). London: Manchester University Press.
- Rotundo, E. A. (1989). Romantic friendships: Male intimacy and middle class youth in the northern United States, 1800-1900. *Journal of Social History*, 23, 1-25.
- Rubin, L. (1985). *Just friends*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Rubin, L. (1990). *Erotic wars: What happened to the sexual revolution?* New York: Harper Collins.
- Sax, L. J., Lindolm, J. A., Astin, A. W., Korn, W. S., & Mahoney, K. M. (1999). *American freshman: National norms for fall 1998*. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California.
- Scanzoni, J. (1995). *Contemporary families and relationships: Reinventing responsibility*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Scanzoni, J. (2000). *Designing families: The search for self and community in the information age*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- Scanzoni, J. (in press). Household diversity: The starting point for healthy families in the new century. In M. Coleman & L. Ganong (Eds.), *Considering the past, contemplating the future*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Scanzoni, J., & Kingsbury, N. (2003). Structural-functional theory. In J. J. Ponzetti, Jr. (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of marriage and family* (pp. 1579-1584). New York: Macmillan Reference USA/Thomson Gale.
- Scanzoni, J., & Marsiglio, W. (1993). New action theory and contemporary families. *Journal of Family Issues*, 14(1), 105-132.
- Scanzoni, J., Polonko, K., Teachman, J., & Thompson, L. (1989). *The sexual bond: Rethinking families and close relationships*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

- Schank, R., & Abelson, R. P. (1977). *Scripts, plans, goals, and understanding: An inquiry into human knowledge structures*. Hillsdale, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates.
- Schwartz, P., & Rutter, V. (1998). *The gender of sexuality*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- Selznick, P. (1961). Review article: The social theories of Talcott Parsons. *American Sociological Review*, 26, 930-952.
- Simmons, C. (1993). Modern sexuality and the myth of victorian repression In B. Melosh (Ed.), *Gender and American history since 1890* (pp. 17-42). London: Routledge.
- Simon, W., & Gagnon, J. (1986). Sexual scripts: Permanence and change. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 15, 97-120.
- Smith, D. (1987). *The everyday world as problematic: A feminist sociology*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Smith, T. (1994). Attitudes toward sexual permissiveness: Trends, correlates, and behavioral connections. In A. S. Rossi (Ed.), *Sexuality across the life course* (pp. 63-97). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Spencer, H. (1876). *The study of sociology*. New York: D. Appleton.
- Sprecher, S. (1989). Premarital sexual standards for different categories of individuals. *Journal of Sex Research*, 26(2), 232-248.
- Staples, R. (1981). *The world of black singles*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Stein, P. (1976). *Single in America*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Strauss, A. L. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Sugarman, S. D. (1998). Single-parent families. In M. A. Mason, A. Skolnick, S. D. Sugarman (Eds.), *All our families: New policies for a new century* (pp. 13-38). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tannahill, R. (1992). *Sex in history* (Rev. ed.). New York: Stein and Day.
- Tannenbaum, L. (2000). *Slut! Growing up in America with a bad reputation*. New York: Seven Stories Press.
- Taylor, R. J., Jackson, J. S., & Linda M. Chatters, L. M. (Eds.). (1997). *Family life in black America*. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.

- Tolman D., & Higgins, T. (1994). How being a good girl can be bad for girls. In N. B. Maglin & D. Perry (Eds.), *Women, sex and power in the nineties* (pp. 205-225). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Thomas, W. I., & Swaine, D. (1928). *The child in America*. New York: Knopf.
- Thornton, A. (1989). Changing attitudes toward family issues in the United States. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 51, 873-93.
- United Jewish Communities. (2002). *National Jewish population survey* [Electronic version]. Retrieved September 30, 2003, from www.us-israel.org/jsource/US-Israel/ujcpop.html
- U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2000). *Supplemental survey summary*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. (1997, May). *National survey of family growth, 1995* (Series 23, No. 19). Hyattsville, MD: Author.
- Vidich, A. J., & Lyman, S. M. (1985). *American sociology: Worldly rejections of religion and their directions*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- White, K. (1993). *The first sexual revolution: The emergence of male heterosexuality in modern America*. New York: New York University Press.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Deena Benveneste Pargman owns a consulting practice specializing in workplace harassment and discrimination issues. She also serves as an adjunct professor at Georgia State University. Deena is an active member of her synagogue, Shearith Israel in Atlanta, and serves on the board of the East Lake Family YMCA and GOAL, an organization dedicated to developing confidence and leadership skills in girls and young women. She is the mother of two boys, Sydney Alec, aged three, and Max Levi, who was born thirty hours after she submitted her completed dissertation. Deena lives in Decatur, Georgia, with her husband, Benjamin Pargman, two sons, and her beloved boxer, Zeke.


I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


John Canzoni, Chair
Professor of Sociology

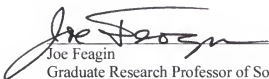
I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


Constance Shehan
Professor of Sociology

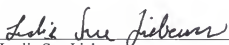
I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


Ronald L. Akers
Professor of Sociology

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


Joe Feagin
Graduate Research Professor of Sociology

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


Leslie Sue Lieberman
Professor of Anthropology,
University of Central Florida

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of Sociology in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

December 2003

Dean, Graduate School